A Body of Doctrinal Divinity, Book 1

Dr John Gill DD

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY

BOOK I

OF GOD, HIS WORD, NAMES, NATURE, PERFECTIONS, AND PERSONS.

BY DR. JOHN GILL DD

PREPARED BY David Clarke FOR PASTORS AND STUDENTS OF CHRIST CENTERED CHURCHES PHILIPPINES

Published by
Bierton Particular Baptists
11 Hayling Close
Fareham
Hampshire
PO143AE

Email: **nbpttc@yahoo.co.uk**
Our Website
www.BiertonParticularBaptists.co.uk

Presentation and Dedication

This new edition of Dr. John Gills, "**Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity",** contains 11 books, now in 5 volumes. It is presented and dedicated to the students, pastors and teachers of Christ-Centered Church Inc. Ministries, Philippines, under the care of William Ola Poloc, its founder and senior pastor (Bishop), on the, 16th January 2020, by David Clarke, founder of Trojan Horse International (TULIP) Inc.

Brief History of the Baguio Christ-Centered Churches Ministries lnc.

Pstr William O. Poloc Sr. was released from the New Bilibid prison in August 2002, where he graduated with a Degree in Theology, and started prison ministries in his hometown Baguio City, with his wife and the aid of a certain missionary from UK , by name David Clarke, the founder of Trojan Horse International. In December 2002 they were able to baptize 22 inmates in Baguio City Jail, 9 inmates in Benguet Provincial jail, along with William's wife Beth Poloc and Josephine Ortis, along with her daughter Karen Basoon, who had all confessed their faith in the lord Jesus Christ. David Clarke returned to the UK in 2003 after his mission.

Later, God gave them a burden to open a church within the city so as to reach out to their families, relatives and friends and William's co-inmates who are still incarcerated at the New Bilibid Prison.

By His grace the Baguio Christ-Centered Church Inc. Stood up. As years go by God continued to bless the church by drawing more souls into it. He also bless us with a bible school to train ministers unable to study in an expensive bible schools. Graduates of our school were sent out to reach lost souls and augment Christ Centered mission churches to different places around the archipelago. As a result, by God's grace and providence Christ Centered Churches were established to the different places in the country.

God's work here in the Northern Philippines bloomed most especially here in the city of Baguio. The Baguio Christ-Centred Church is the mother church of all the Christ Centered Churches in the Philippines namely; The Pilot- Christ-Centred Church, The Kamog Christ-Centred Church, The Christ-Centered-Church Theological School(TULIP), The Christ-Centred Radio Ministry, The Christ-Centred Jail Ministries etc.). We'll, we are truly blessed by these works He has entrusted to us. To God be the glory!

Website **http://www.bccc.com**
Email: **williampolocsr@yahoo.com**
Christ-Centered Ministries Philippines

Personal note from the publisher

It is noted and remarked that this date of publication is the Golden Jubilee [1](Leviticus 25:8-13 King) of conversion of David Clarke, which took place on, 16th January 1971.

http://www.Biertonparticularbaptists.co.uk

David Clarke is the sole remaining member of Bierton Particular Baptists who was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982. The doctrinal foundation of Trojan Horse Mission are those of the Bierton Particular Baptists Articles of religion.

View the Wikipedia Entry for Bierton and view None Conformist Place of Worship

1 8 And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

Chapter 1 **12**
OF THE BEING OF GOD
Chapter 2 **21**
OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
Chapter 3 **36**
OF THE NAMES OF GOD
Chapter 4 **40**
OF THE NATURE OF GOD
Chapter 5 **44**
OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD IN GENERAL, AND OF HIS IMMUTABILITY IN PARTICULAR. **44**
Chapter 6 **51**
OF THE INFINITY OF GOD,
Chapter 7 **59**
OF THE LIFE OF GOD.
Chapter 8 **62**
OF THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.
Chapter 9 **67**
OF THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD
Chapter 10 **73**
OF THE WISDOM OF GOD
Chapter 11 **79**
OF THE WILL OF GOD AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF IT
Chapter 12 **87**
OF THE LOVE OF GOD
Chapter 13 **90**
OF THE GRACE OF GOD
Chapter 14 **93**
OF THE MERCY OF GOD
Chapter 15 **97**
OF THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD.
Chapter 16 **100**
OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD.
Chapter 17 **103**
OF THE ANGER AND WRATH OF GOD.
Chapter 18 **107**
OF THE HATRED OF GOD.
Chapter 19 **110**
OF THE JOY OF GOD.
Chapter 20 **111**
OF THE HOLINESS OF GOD.
Chapter 21 **114**
OF THE JUSTICE OR RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD
Chapter 22 **118**
OF THE VERACITY OF GOD
Chapter 23 **121**

OF THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD
Chapter 24 **126**
OF THE SUFFICIENCY AND PERFECTION OF GOD
Chapter 25 **130**
OF THE BLESSEDNESS OF GOD.
Chapter 26 **133**
OF THE UNITY OF GOD
Chapter 27 **137**
OF A PLURALITY IN THE GODHEAD OR, A TRINITY OF PERSONS IN THE UNITY OF THE DIVINE ESSENCE
Chapter 28 **147**
OF THE PERSONAL RELATIONS; OR, RELATIVE PROPERTIES WHICH DISTINGUISH THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS IN THE DEITY.
Chapter 29 **165**
OF THE DISTINCT PERSONALITY, AND DEITY OF THE FATHER.
Chapter 30 **167**
OF THE DISTINCT PERSONALITY, AND DEITY OF THE SON.
Chapter 31 **172**
OF THE DISTINCT PERSONALITY, AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

FURTHER PUBLICATIONS
APPENDIX ESCHATOLOGY **177**
ASSIGNMENT (ESCHATOLOGY) **177**
A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY BOOK 1 **178**
CONTENTS OF BOOk'S I,II,III,IV,V,VI and VII **178**
THE BIERTON CRISIS **181**
MARY MARY QUITE CONTRARY **183**
TROJAN WARRIORS **183**
THE PAROUSIA **184**
DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH ARTICLES OF RELIGION **190**
THE DOCTRINE OF THE SABBATH 1622 **190**
BEFORE THE COCK CROWS PART 1 **191**
A COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW **192**
WHAT HAPPENED IN A.D. 70 **192**
FINAL DECADE BEFORE THE END **194**
BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS 2ND EDITION **195**
JOSEPHUS: THE WARS OF THE JEWS **196**

Who Is Dr. John Gill

John Gill (23 November 1697 – 14 October 1771) was an English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian who held to a firm Calvinistic soteriology. Born in Kettering , Northamptonshire, he attended Kettering Grammar School where he mastered the Latin classics and learned Greek by age 11. He continued self-study in everything from logic to Hebrew, his love for the latter remaining throughout his life.

Pastoral Work

His first pastoral work was as an intern assisting John Davis at Higham Ferrers in 1718 at age 21. He became pastor at the Strict Baptists church at Goat Yard Chapel, Horselydown, Southwark in 1719. His pastorate lasted 51 years. In 1757 his congregation needed larger premises and moved to a Carter Lane, St. Olave's Street, Southwark. This Baptist church was once pastored by Benjamin Keach and would later become the New Park Street Chapel and then the Metropolitan Tabernacle pastored by Charles Spurgeon.

Works

In 1748, Gill was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Aberdeen. He was a profound scholar and a prolific author. His most important works are:

- The Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated London, 1731)
- The Cause of God and Truth (4 parts, 1725-8), a retort to Daniel Whitby's Five Points.
- An Exposition of the New Testament (3 vols., 1746–8), which with his Exposition of the Old Testament (6 vols., 1748–63) forms his magnum opus
- A Collection of Sermons and Tracts
- A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents (1767)
- A Body of Doctrinal Divinity (1767)
- A Body of Practical Divinity (1770)

Gill also edited and re-published the works of **Rev. Tobias Crisp, D.D**. (1600-1643).

NOTE:

We have not included the Greek, Hebrew or Latin text in the interest of economy.

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY

INTRODUCTION

HAVING completed an exposition of the whole bible, the Books both of the Old and of the New Testament; I considered with myself what would be best next to engage in, for the further instruction of the people under my care ; and my thoughts' led me to enter upon a scheme of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity, first the former and then the latter ; the one being the foundation of the other, and both having a close connexion with each other.

Systematical Divinity, I am sensible, is now become very unpopular. Formulas and articles of faith, creeds, confessions, catechisms, and summaries of divine truths, are greatly decried in our age ; and yet, what art or science soever but has been reduced to a system ? physic, metaphysic, logic, rhetoric, &c. Philosophy, in general, has had its several systems; not to take notice of the various sects and systems of philosophy in ancient times ; in the last age, the Cartesian system of philosophy greatly obtained, as the Newtonian system now does. Medicine, jurisprudence, or law, and every art and science, are reduced to a system or body, which is no other than ah assemblage or composition of the several doctrines or parts of a science; and why should divinity, the most noble science, be without a system ? Kvangelical truths are spread and scattered about in the sacred Scriptures ; and to gather them together, and dispose of tbt•m in a regular, orderly method, surely cannot be disagreeable ; but must be useful, for .the more clear and perspicuous understanding them, for the better retaining them in memor\, and to shew the connection, harmony, and agreement of them. Accordingly we find that Christian writer.*, in ancient times, attempted something of this nature; as the several formulas of faith, symbols or creeds, made in the first three or four centuries of Christianity. Since the reformation, we have had bodies or s)stt.ms of divinity, and confessions of faith, better digested, and drawn up with greater accuracy and consistence; and which have been very serviceable to lead men into the knowledge of evangelical doctrine, and confirm them in it; as well as to shew the agreement and harmony of sound divines and churches, in the more principal parts of it: and even those who now cry out against systems, confessions, and creeds, their predecessors had those of their own. Arius had his crc.ed; and the Socinians have their catechism. The Jews, in imitation of the Christians, have reduced their theology to certain heads or articles of faith.

The Scripture exhibits compendiums or .systems of doctrine and duty. What a compendium or body of laws is the decalogue or ten commands, drawn up and calculated more especially for the use of the Jews, and suited to their circumstances ! a body of laws not to be equalled by the wisest legislators of Greece and Rome, Minos, Lycurgus, Zalcucus, and Numa ; nor by the laws of the twelve Roman tables, for order and recularity, for clearness and perspicuity, for comprehensiveness and brevity. The Lord's prayer consists of petitions the most full, proper, and pertinent, and in the most regular order. And we have a creed made mention of in Heb. vi. 1, 2. consisting of six articles, repentance from dead works, faith towards God, the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

Mention is made in the New Testament' of a form of doctrine delivered, and a form of sound words that had been heard and >ias to be held fast, and of a proportion or analogy of faith, according to which ministers were to prophesy or preach. Rom. vi. 17. 2 Tim. i. 13. Rom. xii. 6.

It is strongly pleadtd that articles and-confessions of faith, in which men are to agree, should be expressed in the bare words of the sacred Scriptures ; but without an explanation of their sense of them in other words, it might introduce into a christian community all sorts of errors that can be named, it would—1. destroy all exposition and interpretation of Scripture; for without words different from, though agreeable to the sacred Scriptures, we can never express our sense of them.—2. To be obliged to express ourselves about divine things in the bare words of Scripture, must tend to make the ministry and preaching of the word in a great measure useless. •—3. This must in a

great measure cramp all religious conversation about divine things, if not destroy it. To what purpose is it for them that fear God to meet frequently and speak often one to another about the things of God and truths of the gospel, if they are not to make use of their own words, to express their sense of these things by them ?—t. Indeed, if this is the case as it would be unlawful to speak or write otherwise than in the words of Scripture, so it would be unlawful to think or conceive in the mind any other than what the Scripture expresses.—5. In this way, the sentiments of one man in any point of religion cannot be distinguished from those of another, though diametrically opposite; so an Ariart cannot be known from an Athanasian ; both will say, in the words of Scripture, that Christ is the great God, the true God, and over all God blessed for ever; but without expressing themselves in their own words, their different sentiments will not be discerned ; the one holding that Christ is a created God, of a like, but not of the same substance with his Father; the other that he is equal with him, of the same nature, substance, and glory.—&• It does not appear that those men who are so strenuous for the use of Scripture-phrases only in articles of religion, have a greater value for the Scriptures than others; nay, not so much ; for if we arc to form a judgment of them by their sermons and writings, one would think they never read the Scriptures at all, or very little, since they make such an unfrequent use of them: you shall scarcely hear a passage of Scripture quoted by them in a sermon, or produced by them in their writings ;, more frequently Seneca, Cicero, and others; and it looks as if they thought it very unpolite, and what might serve to disgrace their more refined writings, to fill their performances with thera.

The subject of the following pages being theology, or whaft we call divinity, it may be proper.to consider the signification, and use of the word, and from whence it has its rise. I say, what we call divinity ; for it seems to be a word, as to the use of it in this subject, peculiar to us ; foreign writers never entitle their works of this kind, corpus vel systema vel medulla^ divinitatis, a bodv or system, or marrow of divinity, but corpus vel systema vel medulla theologi*, a body or system or marrow of theology. The word divinitas, from whence our word divinity comes, is only used by La.in writers for dr,ity or godhead; but since custom and use have long fixed the sense of the word among us, to signify, when used on this subject, a treatise or. the science of divine things, sacred truths, and Christian doctrines, taken out of the Scriptures; we need not scruple the use of it.

Theology is a Greek word, and signifies a discourse concerning God and things belonging to him ; it was first in use among the heathen poets and philosophers. Lactantius says,* the most ancient writers of Greece were, called Theologues ; these were their poets who wrote of their deities, and of the genealogies of them. Thepriests of Delphos, are called by Plutarch,f the Theologues of Delpljos. It is from hence now that these words Theology and Theologues have been borrowed, and made us"e of by Christian writers; and I see no impropriety in the use of them ; uor should they be thought the worse for their original, no more than other words which come from the same source ; for though these words are used of false deities, and of persons that treat of them ; it follows not but that they may be used, with great propriety, of dis. courses concerning the true God, and things belonging to him, and of those that discourse of them. The first among Christians that has the tide of Tbeologue, or Divine, is St. John, the writer of the book of the Revelation ; for so the inscrip- » tion of the book runs, " the Revelation of St. John the Divine."

» De Ira c. 11. t De defect. Orac. p. 417. vid. ib'. 4J0,436.

Whether this word Theologue, or Divine, was originally in the inscription of this book, I will not say- These words Theologue and Theology are to be met with frequently in the ancienl fathers, in following ages, and in all ages, and in all Christian writers to the present times. Upon the whole, it appears.that Theology, or Di\inity, as we call ir, is no other than a science or doctrine concerning God, or a discoursing and treating of things relating to him ; and that a Theologue, or a Divine, is one that understands, discourses, and treats of divine things

Natural tneology may be considered either as it was in Adam before the fall, or as in him and his posterity since the fall. Adam, before the fall, had great

knowledge of ihings, divine as well as natural, moral and civil; he was created in the image of God, which image lay in knowledge, as well as in righteousness and holiness ; before he came short of thjs glory, and lost this image, or at least was greatly impaired and obliterated in him bv sin, he knew much of God, of his nature and attributes, of his mind and will, and the worship of him. But this kind of .theology appeared with a different aspect in Adam after his fall, and in his posterity ; by sin his mind was greatly beclouded,. and his understanding darkened.; he lost much of his knowledge of God, and of his perfections, or he could never have imagined that going among the trees of the garden would hide him from the presence of God, and secure him from his justice. What a notion .must he have of the omnipresence of God? and what also of his omniscience, when he attempted to palliate and cover his sin by the excuse he made ? Of the weakness and insufficiency of natural theology to instruct men in the knowledge of divine" things, destitute of a divine revelation, more may be said hereafter.

Supernatural theology, or what is by pure revelation, may be next considered, in its original rise and progress; and as ic has been improved and increased, or has met with checks and obstructions.

The state of this theology may be considered as it was from the first appearance of it, after the fall of Adam, to the flood in the times,of Noah, or throughout the old world. What gave rise unto and is the foundation of it, is what God pronouncedxo the serpent: it (the seed of the woman) shall bruise thi) head, and thou shall bruise his heel: these words contain the principle articles of Christian theology. This re'ceived some further improvement, from the coats of skin the Lord God mack and tloathed our first parents with, an emblem of the justifying righteousness of Christ, and of the garments of salvation wrought out by his obedience, sufferings, and death; signified by slain beasts; and which God puts upon his people, and clothes them with, through his gracious act of imputation. And what serves to throw more light on this evangelical theology, are the sacrifices ordered to be offered up ; and which were types of the sacrifice of Christ; and particularly that which was offered up by Abel, who, by faith in the saciifice of Christ, offered up a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; which also was a lamb, the firstling of his flock, and pointed at the lamb of God, who by his sacrifice takes away the sins of his people. Within this period of time men seem to have increased in light, as tothe worship of God, especially, public worship ; for in the times of Enos, the grandson of Adam, men btgan to call upon the name of the Lord.

The next period of time in which supernatural theology may be traced, is from the flood, in the times of Noah, to the giving of the laws to Israel, in the times of Moses. The true religion, as it was received from the first man, Adam ; was taught by Noah, and the knowledge of it conveyed to his posterity, partly in the ministry of the word by him, for he was a preacher of righteousness. The sacrifices he offered were of clean creaturfs, and were a sweet savour to God, and were typical of the purity of Christ's sacrifice for sin, and of the acceptance of it to God, which is to him a sweet smelling savour. Moreover, the waters of the flood, and the ark in which Noah and his family were preserved, were a type of an evangelical ordinance, the ordinance of baptism; which is an emblem of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; by which men are saved; lor Noah and his family going into the ark, where, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up below, and the windows of heaven opened above, they were like persons covered in water, and immersed in it, and as persons buried ; and when they came out of• it, the water being carried toff, it was like a resurrection, and as life from the dead; the Me figure, or antitype whereunto, the apostle says, even baptism, doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Christ Jesus signified thereby, 1 Pet. iii. 21. Likewise the rainbow, the token of the covenant; which, though not the covenant of grace, yet of kindness and preservation, was an emblem of peace and reconciliation by Christ, the mediator of the covenant of grace; and may assure of the everlasting love of God to his people, Tand of the immoveableness of the covenant of his peace with them. Moreover, as the gospel was preached unto Abraham, Gal. iii. 8. there is no doubt but that he preached it to others ; and as he had knowledge of the Messiah, who should spring from him, in whom all nations of the earth would be blessed, and who saw his day and was glad; so his grandson Jacob had a more clear and distinct view

of him, as God's salvation, as the Shiloh, the peace-maker and prosperous one, who should come, before civil government was removed from the Jews, and when come, multitudes should be gathered to him, Gen. slix. 10—18. Idolatry within this period first bega among the builders of Babel. The worship of the sun and moon prevailed in the times of Job, in Arabia; who lived about the lime t)f the children of Israel being in Egypt.

The next period is from the giving of the law to Israel by the hand of Moses, to the times of David and the prophets; in which supernatural theology was taught by types; as the passover, the manna, the brazen serpent, and other things ; which were emblems of Christ and his grace: the whole ceremonial law, all that related to the priests, their garments, and their work and office, had an evangelical signification; it was the Jews gospel: Moses wrote of Christ. According to the Jews there was a divinity-school in the times of Samuel. There were within this time some checks to the true knowledge and worship of God, by the idolatry of the calf at Sinai; Baal-peor, on the borders of Moab; and of Baalim and Ashtaroth, and oibr.r deities, after the death of Joshua, and in the times of the Judges.

The period from the times of David, including them, to the Babylonish captivity, abodnds with evangelic truths, and doctrines of supernatural theology. The Psalms of David are full of spiritual and evangelic knowledge. And the pro. phets which followed him speak out still more clearly of the incarnation of Christ; point out the very place where he was to be born, and the country where he would preach the gospel, to the illumination of those that sat in darkness. They plainly describe him in his person, his offices, the sufferings he should undergo, and the circumstances of them, and benefits arising from them ; they bear witness to the doctrines of pardon of sin through him, and justification by him ; and of his bearing sin, and making satisfaction for it: in short, a scheme of evangelic truths may be deduced from the prophetic writings ; and, indeed, the great apostle Paul himself said no other things than what the prophets did. There were some sad revolts from the true God, and his worship, within this compass of time, in the reigns of some of the kings of Israel and Judah»

The period from the Babylonish captivity to the times of* Christ, finish the Old Testament. dispensation. At the return of the Jews from captivity, who brought no idolatrous worship with them, there was a reformation made by Ezra and Nehemiah, with the prophets of their time; or who quickly followed, as Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi; but after the death of these prophets, and the Holy Spirit departed, and there was no more prophecy, supernatural theology began greatlv to decline. The sect of the Sadducees, a sort of free-thinkers, rose up; who said there was no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit: and the sect of the Pharisees, a sort of free-willers, who set up traditions as the rule of men's worship, and which rose to an enormous bigness in the times of Christ, who severely inveighed against them ; and which in after-times were compiled and put together in a volume, called, the Misnah, their traditional, or body of traditions: and this, in course of time, occasioned a large work finished in Babylon, and from thence called the Babylonian Talmud ; which is their doctri. nal, or body of doctrine ; full of fables, false glosses and interpretations of Scriptures ; and which is the foundation of the erroneous doctrines and practices of the Jews to this day.

The theology of the Pagans, according to themselves, as Scsevola* and Varrof testify, was of three sorts,—1. Mystical* or fabulous, which belonged to the poets, and was sung by them.—2. Physical, or natural; which belonged to the philo sophers, and were studied by them 3. Political, or civil* which belonged to princes, priests, and people ; being instituted by the one, exercised by the other, and enjoined on the latter.

But to return to supernatural theology, having traced it to the times of Christ: at whose coming, and through whose ministry, and that of his forerunner, and of his Aposdes, it revived and lift up its head, and appeared in all its purity, splendour, and glory. John was a man sent from God, to bear witness to the light that was just rising, even the sun o£ righteousness* the day-spring from on high; the great light that should lighten those that sat in darkness with a supernatural light; he declared the kingdom of Heaven, or gospel-

dispensation was at hand, and just ushering in ; and preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin, and administered that gospel-ordinance. *» God, who at sundry times* and in divers manners, had spoke to the fathers by the prophets, now spoke to men by his Son :" Christ* his only begotten son* who lay in his bosom, came and declared him ; who and what he was, and what was his mind and will: he brought the doctrines of grace and truth with him ; and spoke such words of grace, truth and wisdom, as never man spoke ; his doctrine was not human, but divine ; it was not his own as man, he received it from his Father, and delivered to his apostles ; who having a commission from him to preach it, and being qualified for it, with the gifts and graces of his" Spirit in great abundance, went into all the world and preached the gospel to every creature ; and diffused the savour of his knowledge in every place.

• Apud. Augustin. de Civ. Dei, 1.4. c. 21. \ Apud. IU. 1. 6. o. 9.

After the holy company of the apostles had ended their lives, and that generation was gone, which was worthy to hear the divine wisdom, then a aystem of impious error took place, through the deceit of false teachers.

The school at Alexandria, from whence came several of the Christian doctors, as Pantanus, Clemens, Origin, &l» served very much to corfupt the simplicity of the gospel: for though it mended the Platonic philosophy, it marred the Christian doctrine ; and laid the foundation for Arianism and Pelagianism, which in after, times so greatly disturbed the church of God. The gospel in its simplicity, through the power of divine grace attending it, made its way into the gentile world, in these first centuries, with great success; and paganism decreased before it; and which in the times of Constantine received a fatal blow in the Roman empire ; and yet by degrees pagan rites and ceremonies were introduced into the Christian church ; and what with them, and errors in doctrine, and other things concurring, made way for the man of sin to appear ; and that mystery of iniquity, which had been secretly working from the times of the apostles, to shew its htad openly; and brought in the darkness of popery upon almost all that bore the Christian name.

In the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, flourished a set of men called Schoolmen ; these framed a new sort of divinity, called from them scholastic theology; the first founder of which some make to be Damascene, among the Greeks and others ; Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, among the Latins ; though generally Peter Lombard is reckoned the father of these men. Their theology lay in content]'ous and litigious disputations ; in thorny questions, and subtle distinctions; and their whole scheme was chiefly directed 18 support antichristianism, and the tenets of it; so that by their means popish darkness was the more increased, and Christian divinity was banished almost out of the world ; and was only to foe found among a few, among the Waldenses and Albigenses, and the inhabitants of the valleys of Piedmont, and some particular persons and their followers, as Wickliff, John Huss, and Jerom of Prague ; and so things continued till the reformation begun by Zuinglius and Luther, and carried on by others; by whose means evangelical light was spread through many nations in Europe.

By many the doctrines of pure revelation are almost exploded, and some are endeavouring to bring us, as fast as they can, into a state of paganism, only somewhat refined. Almost all the old heresies are revived, under a fond and foolish notion of new light; when they are no other than what have been confuted over and over. When men leave the sure word, the only rule of faith and practice, and follow their own fancies, and the dictates of their carnal minds, they must needs go wrong. Let us, therefore, search the Scriptures, to see whether doctrines advanced are according to them or not. I have but little reason to think the following Work will meet with a favourable reception in general; yet if it may be a means of preserving sacred truths, of enlightening the minds of any into them, or of establishing them in them, I shall not be concerned at what evil treatment I may meet with from the adversaries of them ; and be it as it may, I shall have the satisfaction of having done the best I can for the promoting truth; and of bearing a testimony to it.

BOOK 1

OF GOD, HIS WORD, NAMES, NATURE, PERFECTIONS, AND PERSONS

Chapter 1

OF THE BEING OF GOD

Having undertaken to write a System of Theology, or a Body of Doctrinal Divinity; and Theology being nothing else than a speaking of God, or a discoursing concerning him; his nature, names, perfections, and persons; his purposes, providences, ways, works, and word: I shall begin with the Being of God, and the proof and evidence of it; which is the foundation of all religion; for if there is no God, religion is a vain thing; and it matters not neither what we believe, nor what we do; since there is no superior Being to whom we are accountable for either faith or practice. Some, because the being of God is a first principle, which is not to be disputed; and because that there is one is a self-evident proposition, not to be disproved; have thought it should not be admitted as a matter of debate: but since such is the malice of Satan, as to suggest the contrary to the minds of men; and such the badness of some wicked men as to listen to it, and imbibe it; and such the weakness of some good men as to be harassed and distressed with doubts about it at times; it cannot be improper to endeavour to fortify our minds with reasons and arguments against such suggestions and insinuations. And my

1. First argument to prove the Being of a God, shall be taken from the **general consent of men of all nations**, in all ages of the world; among whom the belief of it has universally obtained; which it is not reasonable to suppose would have obtained, if it was not true. This has been observed by many heathen writers themselves. Aristotle says, "all men have a persuasion of Deity, or that there is a God." Cicero observes, "There is no nation so wild and savage, whose minds are not imbued with the opinion of the gods; many entertain wrong notions of them; but all suppose and own the divine power and nature." And in another place he says, "There is no animal besides man that has any knowledge of God; and of men there is no nation so untractable and fierce, although it may be ignorant what a God it should have, yet is not ignorant that one should be had." And again, "It is the sense of all mankind, that it is "innate" in all, and is, as it were, engraven on the mind, that there is a God; but what a one he is, in that they vary; but that he is, none denies." And to the same sense are the words of Seneca, "There never was a nation so dissolute and abandoned, so lawless and immoral, as to believe there is no God." So Aelianus relates, "None of the barbarous nations ever fell into atheism, or doubted of the gods whether they were or not, or whether they took care of human affairs or not; not the Indians, nor the Gauls, nor the Egyptians." And Plutarch has these remarkable words, "If you go over the earth, says he, you may find cities without walls, letters, kings, houses, wealth, and money, devoid of theatres and schools; but a city without temples and gods, and where is no use of prayers, oaths, and oracles, nor sacrifices to obtain good or avert evil, no man ever saw." These things were observed and said, when the true knowledge of God was in a great measure lost, and idolatry prevailed; and yet even then, this was the general sense of mankind. In the first ages of the world, men universally believed in the true God, and worshipped him, as Adam and his sons, and their posterity, until the flood; nor does there appear any trace of idolatry before it, nor for some time after. The sins which caused that, and with which the world was filled, seem to be lewdness and uncleanness, rapine and violence. Some think the tower of Babel was built for an idolatrous use; and it may be that about that time idolatry was set up; as it is thought to have prevailed in the days of Serug: and it is very probable that when the greater part of the posterity of Noah's sons were dispersed throughout the earth, and settled in the distant parts of it; that as they were remote from those among whom the true worship of God was preserved; they, by degrees, lost sight of the true God, and forsook his worship; and this being the case, they began to worship the sun in his stead, and which led on to the worship of the moon, and the host of heaven; which seem to be the first objects of idolatry. This was as early as the times Job, who plainly refers to it, (Job 31:26, 27). And, indeed, when men had cast off the true object of worship, what more natural to substitute in his room than the sun, moon, and stars, which were above them, visible by them, and so glorious in themselves, and so beneficial to the earth and men on

it? Hence the people of Israel were exhorted to take care that their eyes were not ensnared at the sight of them, to fall down and worship them; and which in later times they did (Deut. 4:19; 2 King 21:3). It appears also that men took very early to the deifying of their heroes after death, their kings, and great personages, either for their wisdom and knowledge, or for their courage and valour, and martial exploits, and other things; such were the Bel, or Belus, of the Babylonians; the Baalpeor of the Moabites. ;and the Molech of the Phoenicians, and other Baalim lords, or kings, mentioned in the Scriptures: and such were Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Hercules; and the rest of the rabble of the heathen deities; and indeed their Lares, and Penates, or household gods, were no other than the images of their deceased parents, or more remote ancestors, whose memory they revered; and in process of time their deities became very numerous; they had gods many and lords many: even with the Jews, when fallen into idolatry, their gods were according to the number of their cities (Jer. 2:28). And as for the Gentiles, they worshipped almost everything; not only the sun, moon, and stars; but the earth, fire, and water; and various sorts of animals, as oxen, goats, and swine, cats and dogs, the fishes of the rivers, the river horse, and the crocodile, those amphibious creatures; the fowls of the air, as the hawk, stork, and ibis; and even insects, the fly; yea, creeping things, as serpents, the beetle, &c.; as also vegetables, onions, and garlic; which occasioned the satirical poet to say, "O sanctas gentes quibus haec nascuntur in hortis, numina!" O holy nations, whose gods are born in their gardens! Nay, some have worshipped the devil himself, as both in the East and West Indies; and that for this reason, that he might not harm them. Now though all this betrays the dreadful depravity of human nature; the wretched ignorance of mankind; and the sad stupidity men were sunk into; yet at the same time such shocking idolatry, in all the branches of it, is a full proof of the truth and force of my argument, that all men, in all ages and countries, have been possessed of the notion of a God; since, rather than to have no God, they have chosen false ones; so deeply rooted is a sense of Deity in the minds of all men.

I am sensible that to this it is objected, that there have been, at different times, and in different countries, some particular persons who have been reckoned atheists, deniers of the Being of a God. But some of these men were only deriders of the gods of their country; they mocked at them as unworthy of the name, as weak and insufficient to help them; as they reasonably might; just as Elijah mocked at Baal and his worshippers. Now the common people, because they so behaved towards their gods, looked upon them as atheists, as such who did not believe there was any God. Others were so accounted, because they excluded the gods from any concern with human affairs; they thought they were other ways employed, and that such things were below their notice, and not becoming their grandeur and dignity to regard; and had much the same sentiments as some of the Jews had (Eze. 9:9; Zep. 1:12). But these men were not deniers of the existence of God, only of his providence as to the affairs of the world: and others have been rather practical than speculative atheists, as the fool in Psalm 14:1, who not only live as if there was no God; but wish in their hearts there was none, rather than believe there is none; that so they might take their fill of sin, without being accountable to a superior Being. The number of real speculative atheists have been very few, if any; some have boldly asserted their disbelief of a God; but it is a question whether their hearts and mouths have agreed; at least they have not been able to maintain their unbelief long without some doubts and fears. And at most this only shows how much the reason of man may be debased, and how low it may sink when left to itself: these few instances are only particular exceptions to a general rule; which is not destroyed thereby, being contrary to the common sense of mankind; even as it is no sufficient objection to the definition of man, as a rational creature, that there is now and then an idiot born of his race, so not to the general belief of Deity, that there is now and then an atheist in the world.

It is further objected, that there have been whole nations in Africa and America, who have no notion of Deity. But this is what has not been sufficiently proved; it depends upon the testimonies of travellers, and what one affirms, another denies; so that nothing can with certainty be concluded from them. "I should rather question, says Herbert, Lord Cherbury, whether the light of the sun has shone on the remotest regions,

than that the knowledge of the Supreme Being is hidden from them; since the sun is only conspicuous in its own sphere; but the Supreme Being is seen in everything." Diodorus Siculus says, a few of the Ethiopians were of opinion there was no God; though before he had represented them as the first and most religious of all nations, as attested by all antiquity. The Hottentots about the Cape of Good Hope have been instanced in, as without any knowledge of Deity: and certainly they are a most beastly and brutish people that can be named, and the most degenerate of the human species, and have survived the common instincts of humanity; yet, according to Mr. Kolben's account of them, published some years ago, they appear to have some sense of a Supreme Being, and of inferior deities. They express a superstitious joy at new and full moons; and it is said they pray to a Being that dwells above; and offer sacrifice of the best things they have, with eyes lifted up to heaven. And later discoveries of other nations, show the contrary to what has been asserted of them; which assertions have arose either from want of intimate knowledge of them, and familiar acquaintance with them, or from their dissolute, wicked, and irreligious lives; when, by conversing with them, it appears that they have a notion of the sun, or sky, or something or another being a sort of deity. Thus it has been observed of the Greenlanders, that "they had neither a religion nor idolatrous worship; nor so much as any ceremonies to be perceived tending to it: hence the first missionaries entertained a supposition, that there was not the least trace to be found among them of any conception of a divine Being, especially as they had no word to express him by. But when they came to understand their language better, they found quite the reverse to be true, from the notions they had, though very vague and various, concerning the soul, and concerning spirits; and also from their anxious solicitude about the state after death. And not only so, but they could plainly gather from a free dialogue they had with some perfectly wild Greenlanders, that their ancestors must have believed a supreme Being, and did render him some service; which their posterity neglected by little and little, the further they were removed from more wise and civilised nations; till at last they lost every just conception of the Deity; yet, after all, it is manifest, that a faint idea of a divine Being lies concealed in the minds even of this people, because they directly assent, without any objection, to the doctrine of a God, and his attributes." And as to what is concluded from the irreligious lives of the inhabitants of some nations, we need not be sent to Africa and America for such atheists as these; we have enough of them in our own nation; and I was just ready to say, we are a nation of atheists in this sense: and, indeed, all men in an unregenerate state, be they Jews or Gentiles, or live where they may, they are ayeoi, "atheists"; as the apostle calls them, (Eph 2:12) they are "without God in the world, being alienated from the life of God", (Eph 4:18) otherwise there is such a general sense of Deity in mankind; and such a natural inclination to religion, of some sort or another, though ever so bad, that some have thought that man should rather be defined as a religious than a rational animal. I take no notice of the holy angels, who worship God continually; nor of the devils, who believe there is one God and tremble; my argument being only concerned with men.

2. The second argument shall be taken from the law and light of nature; or from the general instinct in men, or impress of Deity on the mind of every man; that is, as soon as he begins to have the exercise of his rational powers, he thinks and speaks of God, and assents to the Being of a God. This follows upon the former, and is to be proved by it; for as Cicero says, "The consent of all nations in anything, is to be reckoned the law of nature." And since all nations agree in the belief of a Deity, that must be a part of the law of nature, inscribed on the heart of every man. Seneca makes use of this to prove there is a God; he says: "because an opinion or sense of Deity, is "implanted" in the minds of all men." And so likewise Cicero, as observed before; and who calls them the notions of Deity implanted and innate. And whoever believes the Mosaic account of the creation of man, cannot doubt of this being his case, when first created; since he is said to be made in the image, and after the likeness of God; for the image of God surely could not be impressed upon him, without having the knowledge of him implanted in him; and though man by sinning has greatly come short of this image and glory of God, yet this light of nature is not wholly obscured, nor the law of nature entirely obliterated in him; there are some remains

of it. There are some indeed among us, who deny there are any innate ideas in the minds of men, and particularly concerning God: but to such writers and reasoners I pay but little regard; when the inspired apostle assures us, that even the Gentiles, destitute of the law of Moses, have "the work of the law written in their hearts", (Rom. 2:15) which, as it regards duty to God, as well as man, necessarily supposes the knowledge of him; as well as of the difference between good and evil, as founded upon his nature and will: and though this light of nature is not sufficient to lead men, in their present state, to a true spiritual and saving knowledge of God; yet it furnishes them with such a sense of him, as puts them upon seeking him; "if haply they may feel and grope after him, and find him", (Acts 17:27). These notices of a divine Being do not flow from the previous instructions of parents and others; but from a natural instinct; at most, they are only drawn forth by instruction and teaching; Velleius, the Epicurean, says , "that there is a Deity nature itself has impressed the notion of on the minds of all men; for what nation, or sort of men, "he adds, "that has not a certain anticipation of it without being taught it, "or before taught it, as Julian expresses it: nor do these notices take their rise from state policy; or are the effects of that originally: if this was the case, if it was the contrivance of politicians to keep men in awe, and under subjection, it must be the contrivance of one man, or more united together. If of one, say, who is the man? in what age he lived, and where? and what is his name, or his son's name? If of more, say, when and where they existed? and who they were that met together? and where they formed this scheme? And let it be accounted for; if it can, that such a number of sage and wise men, who have been in the world; that no man should be able to get into the secret, and detect the fallacy and discover it, and free men from the imposition. Besides, these notices appeared before any scheme of politics was formed; or kings or civil magistrates were in being. Plato has refuted this notion; and represents it as a very pestilent one, both in private and in public. Nor are these notices by tradition from one to another; since traditions are peculiar to certain people: the Jews had theirs, and so had the Gentiles; and particular nations among them had separate ones from each other; but these are common to all mankind: nor do they spring from a slavish fear and dread of punishment; for though it has been said, that fear makes gods, or produces a notion of Deity; the contrary is true, that Deity produces fear, as will be seen in a following argument.

Under this head may be observed the innate desires of men after happiness, which are so boundless as not to be satisfied. Let a man have ever so great a compass of knowledge and understanding; or possess ever so large a portion of wealth and riches; or be indulged with the gratification of his senses to the highest degree; or enjoy all the pleasure the whole creation can afford him; yet after all, according to the wise man, the conclusion of the whole is, "all is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Eccl. 2:17). Now these desires are not in vain implanted, there must be an object answerable unto them; a perfect Being, which is no other than God; who is the first cause and last end of all things, of whom the Psalmist says, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth my soul desires besides thee" (Ps. 73:25).

3. The third argument, proving the Being of God, shall be taken from **the works of creation**; concerning which the apostle says, "the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen; being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1:20). Plutarch, in answer to a question, Whence have men the knowledge of God? replies, "They first receive the knowledge of him from the beauty of things that appear; for nothing beautiful is made in vain, nor by chance, but wrought with some art: that the world is beautiful, is manifest from the figure, the colour, and magnitude of it; and from the variety of stars about the world." And these so clearly display the Being and power of God, as to leave the heathen without excuse, as the apostle observes; and as this, and other instances, show. Most admirable was the reasoning of a wild Greenlander, which he declared to a missionary to be the reasoning of his mind before his conversion; he said to him, "It is true we were ignorant heathens, and knew nothing of God, or a Saviour; and, indeed, who should tell us of him till you come? but thou must not imagine that no Greenlander thinks about these things. I myself have often thought: a "kajak" (a boat) with all its tackle and implements, does not grow into existence of itself; but

must be made by the labour and ingenuity of man; and one that does not understand it would directly spoil it. Now the meanest bird has far more skill displayed in its structure, than the best "kajak"; and no man can make a bird: but there is still a far greater art shown in the formation of a man, than of any other creature. Who was it that made him? I thought myself that he proceeded from his parents, and they from their parents; but some must have been the first parents; whence did they come? common report informs me, they grew out of the earth: but if so, why does it not still happen that men grow out of the earth? and from whence did this same earth itself, the sea, the sun, the moon, and stars, arise into existence? Certainly there must be some Being who made all these things; a Being that always was, and can never cease to be. He must be inexpressibly more mighty, knowing, and wise, than the wisest man. He must be very good too, because that everything that he has made is good, useful, and necessary for us. Ah, did I but know him, how would I love him and honour him! But who has seen him? who has ever conversed with him? None of us poor men. Yet there may be men too that know something of him. O that I could but speak with such! therefore," he said, "as soon as ever I heard you speak of this great Being, I believed it directly, with all my heart; because I had so long desired to hear it." A glaring proof this, that a supreme Being, the first cause of all things, is to be concluded from the works of creation. The notion of the eternity of the world has been imbibed by some heathens, but sufficiently confuted by others. And even Aristotle, to whom it is ascribed, asserts, that "it was an ancient doctrine, and what all men received from their ancestors; that all things are of God, and consist by him." And those that believe the divine revelation, cannot admit of any other doctrine; but must explode the notion of the eternity of the world, and of its being of itself; since that assures us, that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth": also that all things were made, "not of things which do appear", but out of nothing, (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3) for, be it, that the heavens and the earth were made out of a chaos, or out of pre-existent matter; it may be reasonably asked, out of what was that pre-existent matter made? the answer must be, out of nothing; since it was by creation, which is the production of something out of nothing: and which can never be performed by the creature; for out of nothing, nothing can be made by that. If therefore all things are originally produced out of nothing, it must be by one that is almighty, whom we rightly call God. No creature can produce itself; this involves such contradictions as can never be admitted; for then a creature must be before it was; as that which makes must be before that which is made: it must act and operate before it exists; and be and not be at one and the same time; which are such glaring contradictions, as sufficiently confute the creature's making itself; and therefore its being must be owing to another cause; even to God, the Creator; for between a creature and God, there is no medium: and if it could be thought or said, that the most excellent creatures, men, made themselves; besides the above contradictions, which would be implied, it might be asked, why did not they make themselves wiser and better; since it is certain, they have knowledge of beings superior to them? and how is it that they know so little of themselves, either of their bodies or their souls, if both were made by them? and why are they not able to preserve themselves from a dissolution to which they are all subject? It may be further observed; that effects, which depend upon causes in subordination to one another, cannot be traced up "ad infinitum"; but must be reduced to some first cause, where the inquiry must rest; and that first cause is God. Now here is an ample field to survey; which furnishes out a variety of objects, and all proofs of Deity. There is nothing in the whole creation the mind can contemplate, the eye look upon, or the hand lay hold on, but what proclaims the Being of God. When we look up to the heavens above us; the surrounding atmosphere; the air in which we breathe, which compresses our earth, and keeps it together; the stellar space, and spreading sky, bespangled with stars of light, and adorned with the two great luminaries, the sun and moon, especially the former, that inexhaustible fountain of light and heat; and under whose benign influences, so many things are brought forth on earth; whose circuit is from one end of the heaven to the other; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof: when we consider its form, magnitude, and virtue; its proper distance from us, being not so near us as to

scorch us; nor so remote as to be of no use to us; the motion given it at first, in which it has proceeded without stopping, but once as is supposed, in the days of Joshua; a motion it has had now almost six thousand years; the course it has steered, and steers, so that all parts of the earth, at one season or another, receive benefit by it; and the way it has been guided in, without varying or erring from it all this while. Whoever reflects on these things, must acknowledge it to be the work of an all wise and almighty agent, we call God; and that it must be upheld, guided, and directed by his hand alone. When we take a view of the earth, of the whole terraqueous globe, hanging on nothing, like a ball in the air, poised with its own weight; the different parts of it, and all disposed for the use of man; stored with immense riches in the heart of it, and stocked with inhabitants upon it; the various sorts of animals, of different forms and shapes, made, some for strength, some for swiftness, some for bearing burdens, and others for drawing carriages, some for food and others for clothing: the vast variety of the feathered birds that cut the air; and the innumerable kinds of fishes that swim the ocean. The consideration of all this will oblige us to say, "Lord, thou art God, which hast made the heaven, earth, and sea; and all that in them is" (Acts 4:25). In short, there is not a shell in the ocean, nor a sand on the shore, nor a spire of grass in the field, nor any flower of different hue and smell in the garden, but what declare the Being of God: but especially our own composition is deserving of our notice; the fabric of the body, and the faculties of our souls. The body, its form and shape; while other animals look downwards to the earth, "os homini sublime dedit Deus", as the poet says, man has a lofty countenance given him, to behold the heavens, to lift up his face to the stars; and for what is this erect posture given him, but to adore his Creator? And it is remarkable that there is a natural instinct in men to lift up their hands and eyes to heaven, when either they have received any unexpected mercy, by way of thankfulness for it; or are in any great distress, as supplicating deliverance from it; which supposes a divine Being, to whom they owe the one, and from whom they expect the other. Each of the parts and members of the body are so framed and disposed, as to be subservient to one another; so that "the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you". The same may be observed of the other members. The inward parts, which are weak and tender, and on which life much depends, were they exposed, would be liable to much danger and hurt; but these are "clothed with skin and flesh, and fenced with bones and sinews"; and every bone, and every nerve, and every muscle, are put in their proper places. All the organs of the senses, of sight, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling, are most wonderfully fitted for the purposes for which they are made. Galen, an ancient noted physician, being atheistically inclined, was convinced of his impiety by barely considering the admirable structure of the eye; its various humours, tunics, and provision for its defence and safety. The various operations performed in our bodies, many of which are done without our knowledge or will, are enough to raise the highest admiration in us: as the circulation of the blood through all parts of the body, in a very small space of time; the respiration of the lungs; the digestion of the food; the chylification of it; the mixing of the chyle with the blood; the nourishment thereby communicated; and which is sensibly perceived in the several parts of the body, and even in the more remote; which having been weakened and enfeebled by hunger, thirst, and labour, are in an instant revived and strengthened; and the accretion and growth of parts by all this. To which may be added other things worthy of notice; the faculty of speech, peculiar to man, and the organs of it; the features of their faces; and the shape of their bodies, which all differ from one another; the constant supply of animal spirits; the continuance of the vital heat, which outlasts fire itself; the slender threads and small fibres spread throughout the body, which hold and perform their office seventy or eighty years running: all which, when considered, will oblige us to say, with the inspired Psalmist, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well": and will lead us to ascribe this curious piece of workmanship to no other than to the divine Being, the God of all flesh living.

But the soul of man, the more noble part of him, more fully discovers the original author of him; being possessed of such powers and faculties that none but

God could give: it is endowed with an understanding, capable of receiving and framing ideas of all things knowable, in matters natural, civil, and religious; and with reason, to put these together, and compare them with each other, and discourse concerning them; infer one thing from another, and draw conclusions from them: and with judgment, by which it passes sentence on things it takes cognizance of, and reasons upon; and determines for itself what is right or wrong; and so either approves or disapproves: it has a "mind" susceptive of what is proposed unto it; it can, by instruction or study, learn any language; cultivate any art or science; and, with the help of some geographical principles, can travel over the globe, can be here and there at pleasure, in the four parts of the world; and in a short time, visit every city of note therein, and describe the situation of every country, with their religion, manners, customs, &c. it can reflect on things past, and has a foresight of, and can forecast and provide for things to come: it has a "will", to accept or reject, to embrace or refuse, what is proposed unto it; with the greatest freedom of choice, and with the most absolute power and sovereignty: it has affections, of love and hatred, joy and grief, hope and fear, &c. according to the different objects it is conversant with. There is also the conscience, which is to a man as a thousand witnesses, for him or against him; which, if it performs its office as it should do, will accuse him when he does ill, and commend, or excuse him, when he does well; and from hence arise either peace of mind, or dread of punishment, in some shape or another, either here or hereafter: to which may be added the memory, which is a storehouse of collections of things thought to be most valuable and useful; where they are laid up, not in a confused, but orderly manner; so as to be called for and taken out upon occasion: here men of every character and profession lay up their several stores, to have recourse unto, and fetch out, as their case and circumstances may require. And besides this, there is the "fancy or imagination", which can paint and describe to itself, in a lively manner, objects presented to it, and it has entertained a conception of; yea, it can fancy and imagine things that never were, nor never will be: and, to observe no more, there is the power of invention; which in some is more, in others less fertile; which, on a sudden, supplies with what is useful in case of an emergency. But above all, the "soul" of man is that wherein chiefly lay the image and likeness of God, when man was in his pure and innocent state; and though it is now sadly depraved by sin, yet it is capable of being renewed by the spirit of God, and of having the grace of God implanted in it, and is endowed with immortality, and cannot die: now to whom can such a noble and excellent creature as this owe its original? but to the divine Being, who may, with great propriety, be called, the Father of spirits, the Lord, the Jehovah, who "formeth the spirit of man within him".

4. The fourth argument will be taken from the sustaining and government of the world; the provision made for the supply of creatures, and especially of man, and for his safety. As the world, as we have seen, is made by a divine Being, so by him it consists. Was there not such an almighty Being, "who upholds all things by the word of his power", they would sink and fall. Did he not bear up the pillars of the earth, they would tremble and shake, and not be able to bear its weight: the most stately, firm, and well built palace, unless repaired and maintained, will fall to decay and ruin; and so the grand and magnificent building of this world would soon be dissolved, did not the divine agent that made it, keep it up: as he that built all things is God, so he that supports the fabric of the universe must be so too; no less than an almighty hand can preserve and continue it; and which has done it, without any visible appearance of age or decay, for almost six thousand years; and though there is such a vast number of creatures in the world, besides men, the beasts of the field, and "the cattle on a thousand hills", the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea; there is food provided for them all, and they have "every one their portion of meat in due season": and as for man, he is richly provided for, with a plenty and variety of all good things; not only for necessity, but for delight; every man has a trade, business, and employment of life; or is put into such a situation and circumstances, that, with care, diligence, and industry, he may have enough for himself and family, and to spare: the earth produces a variety of things for food and drink for him; and of others for medicine, for the continuance of health, and restoration of it. And can all this be without the care, providence, and interposition of a

wise and almighty Being? Can these ever be thought to be the effects of blind chance and fortune? Is it not plain and clear, that God hereby "has not left himself without a witness of his existence and providence, in that he does good to all his creatures, and gives rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons; filling mens' hearts with food and gladness"; and continuing the certain and constant revolutions of "summer and winter, seedtime and harvest"; as well as night and day, cold and heat; all which have their peculiar usefulness and advantages to human life; and cannot be attributed to anything else than the superintendency of the divine Being.

And as there is a provision made for the wants of men, so for their safety: were it not that God had put the fear of man upon the wild beasts of the field, and the dread of him in them, there would be no safety for him, especially in some parts of the world; and had he not put a natural instinct into them to avoid the habitations of men, and to resort to woods and deserts, and dwell in uninhabited places; to prowl about for their prey in the night, and in the morning return to their caves and dens, and lurking places; when men go forth to their work, they would be in the utmost danger of their lives: yea, were it not for the overruling providence of God, which governs the world, and restrains the lusts of men, "homo esset homini lupus"; "one man would be a wolf to another"; neither life nor property would be secure; but must fall a prey to the rapine and violence of powerful oppressors. Human laws, and civil magistracy, do something to restrain men, but not everything; notwithstanding these, we see what outrages are committed: and how greater still would be their number, was it not for the interposition of divine providence: and even it is owing to a divine Being that there are human forms of government, and political schemes framed, and laws made for the better regulation of mankind, and these continued; for it is by him "kings reign, and princes decree justice": and particularly, was it not for a divine agency, such is the rage and malice of Satan, and his principalities and powers, whose numbers fill the surrounding air; and who go about our earth like roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour; were they not chained by almighty power, and limited by the providence of God, the whole race of men would be destroyed by them, at least the godly among them.

5. The fifth argument may be taken from the uncommon heroic actions, prodigies, wonders, and miraculous things done in the world; which cannot be thought to be done without a superior and divine influence. Heroic actions, such as that of Abraham, who, with three hundred household servants, pursued after, and engaged with four kings who had beaten five before, and recovered the goods they had taken away: of Shamgar, who fought with and killed six hundred Philistines with an ox goad: and of Samson, who slew a thousand of them with the jawbone of an ass: of Jonathan, and his armour bearer, who attacked and took a garrison of the same people, and threw a whole army of theirs into a panic and confusion; who had been for some time a terror to the whole land of Israel: and of David, a stripling, fighting with and conquering Goliath, a monstrous giant. These are scripture instances; and if scripture is only regarded as a common history; these merit our notice and credit, as any of the relations in profane history; in which are recorded the magnanimous actions of heroes, kings, and generals of armies; their wonderful successes, and amazing conquests; as of the Babylonians, Persians, Grecians, and Romans; which made such strange revolutions and changes in kingdoms and states; all which can never be supposed to be done without superior power, and the overruling, influencing providence of the divine Being; who inspired men to do things beyond their natural skill and courage; prodigies, strange and wonderful events; for which no natural cause can be assigned; such as the strange sights seen in the air, and voices heard in the temple, before the destruction of Jerusalem; with other things, related by Josephus, and confirmed by Tacitus, an heathen historian; to which might be added many others, which histories abound with: but besides these, things really miraculous have been wrought, such as are not only out of, and beyond the course of nature, but contrary to it, and to the settled laws of it; such as the miracles of Moses and the prophets, and of Christ and his apostles; which are recorded in the scriptures; and others in human writings; which are so well attested as oblige us to give credit to them: now, though these were not done to prove a divine Being; which needs them not; yet they necessarily suppose

one, by whose power alone they are performed.

6. The sixth argument may be formed from the prophesies of contingent future events, and the exact fulfilment of them. This is what is challenged and required from heathen deities, to prove their right to such a character; as being what none but God can do: "Let them bring forth and show us what shall happen: or declare us things for to come: show the things that are to come hereafter; that we may know that ye are gods: which is what none but the true God can do, and has done; and which being done, proves there is a God, and one that is truly so; instances of which there are many in the sacred writings; prophesies which relate both to particular persons and to whole kingdoms and states; which have had their exact accomplishment: but not to insist on these, since those who are atheistically inclined, disbelieve the divine revelation; let it be observed, that the heathens have had their auguries, soothsayings, divinations, and oracles; by which pretensions have been made to foretell future events. That there is such a thing as divination, is said to be confirmed by the consent of all nations; and is explained of a presension and knowledge of future things: now this being granted, it may be reasoned upon, that if there is a foretelling of future things, which certainly come to pass, there must be a God; since none but an omniscient Being can, with certainty, foretell what shall come to pass, which does not depend on necessary causes; and cannot be foreseen by the quickest sight, and sharpest wit, and sagacity of a creature.

7. The seventh argument may be urged from the fears of men, and the tortures of a guilty conscience, and the dread of a future state. Some are terribly frightened at thunder and lightning, as Caligula, the Roman Emperor, used to be; who, at such times, would hide himself in, or under his bed; and yet this man set himself up for a god. Now these fears and frights are not merely on account of the awful sound of the thunder, and the dreadful flashes of lightning; but because of the divine and tremendous Being who is supposed to send them: the Heathens were sensible that thunder is the voice of God, as the scriptures represent it, and therefore called their Jove, "Jupiter tonans"; "the thundering Jupiter". Many have been so terrified in their consciences on account of sin, that they could get no rest, nor enjoy peace any where, or by any means: as Cain, under the terrors of an evil conscience, fancied that "everyone that found him would slay him": and those wicked traitors, Catiline and Jugurtha: and those wicked emperors, those monsters in impiety, Tiberius and Nero, and especially the latter, who was so tortured in his conscience, as if he was continually haunted by his mother's ghost, and by furies with burning torches: and Hobbes, our English atheist, as he was reckoned, was wont to be very uneasy when alone in the dark: and Epicurus, the philosopher, though he taught men to despise death, and out brave it; yet, when he perceived that he himself was about to die, was most terribly frightened; and this has been the case of many others: bold and "strong spirits", as atheistical persons love to be called, have been sometimes found to be very timorous and fearful. And, indeed, this is natural to all men, and which is proof of a superior Being. Thus a wild Greenlander argued, before he had knowledge of the true God: "Man has an intelligent soul, is subject to no creature in the world; and yet man is afraid of the future state: who is it that he is afraid of there? That must be a great Spirit that has dominion over us, O did we but know him! O had we but him for our friend!" Now what do all these fears and tortures of conscience arise from, but from the guilt of sin, and a sense of a divine Being; who is above men, and will call them to an account for their sins, and take vengeance on them? And, indeed, the eternal punishment that will be inflicted on them, will greatly lie in the tortures of their conscience, which is the worm that will never die; and, in a sense of divine wrath, which is that fire that will never be quenched.

8. The eighth and last argument shall be taken from the judgments in the world; not only famine, sword, pestilence, earthquakes, &c, but such that have been inflicted on wicked men, atheistical persons, perjured ones, blasphemers, and the like. Not to take notice of the universal flood, which swept away a world of ungodly men; and of the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, with other cities of the plain, by fire and brimstone from heaven; which yet are abundantly confirmed by the testimonies of heathen writers; nor of the awful instances in the New Testament, of Herod being smitten by an angel, and eaten of worms, and

died, while the people was shouting him as a God, and he assented to their flattery; and of Ananias and Sapphira, being struck dead for lying unto God: besides these, there are innumerable instances of judgments, of the same or a like kind, in all ages and countries, recorded in the histories of them; and in our nation, and in our age, and within our knowledge; and who now can hear or read such awful judgments, and disbelieve the Being of God?

Chapter 2

OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

As what I shall say hereafter concerning God, his essence, perfections, persons, works, and worship, and everything relative to him, will be taken out of the sacred scriptures, and proved by them; it will be necessary, before I proceed any further, to secure the ground I go upon; and establish the divine authority of them; and show that they are a perfect, plain, and sure rule to go by; and are the standard of faith and practice; and to be read constantly, studied diligently, and consulted with on all occasions.

By the Scriptures, I understand the books of the Old and of the New Testament. The books of the Old Testament, are the five books of Moses; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, sometimes called the Pentateuch; the historical books, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the two books of Samuel, the two of Kings, the two of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther; the poetical books, Job, the Psalms,

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Solomon's Song; the prophetic books, the larger Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, with the Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel; the lesser

Prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The books of the New Testament the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the Acts of the Apostles; the fourteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul; one of James; two of Peter; three of John; one of Jude, and the Revelation. These books are commonly called Canonical Scripture, because they have been always received by the church into the canon, or rule of faith. The books of the Old Testament, by the Jewish church; with which entirely agree Josephus's account of them, and the catalogue of them brought from the East by Melito; and the books of both Testaments agree with the account which Origen gives of them in his time, and which have always been acknowledged by the Christian church; and which testimony of both churches, respecting them, deserves our regard, and tends to corroborate their divine authority. Now these are the books which the apostle calls, "all Scripture", or the whole of Scripture, said by him to be "given by inspiration of God": which include not only the books of the Old Testament, which had been long in being in his time; but the books of the New Testament, which were all of them then written before the destruction of Jerusalm in 70 A.D.[2], (Editors note, Gill actually wrote, "Excepting the book of the Revelation; since these words of his stand in an epistle supposed to be the last that was written by him; and however what is said by him is true of what might be written afterwards, for the uses he mentions, as well as before.' he he was mistaken)

From these must be excluded, as un-canonical, the books that bear the name of Apocrypha; which are sometimes bound up with the Bible, to the great scandal and disgrace of it; for though there may be some things in them worthy to be read, as human writings; there is such a mixture of falsehood and impiety, that they cannot by any means be allowed to be placed upon an equality with the sacred scriptures.

Likewise all such spurious books falsely ascribed to the apostles, or to some of the first Christians; as, The Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus; The Constitutions of the Apostles; Hermes's Pastor, &c. which carry in them manifest marks of imposture.

To which may be added, all human and unwritten traditions, pleaded for by the papists; and all dreams and visions, and pretended revelations and prophecies, delivered out in later ages, by enthusiastic persons. Blessed be God, we have a more sure word of prophecy to attend unto; concerning which, I shall,

1. Observe the divine authority of the Scriptures, or show, that they are from God, or inspired by him; they lay in a claim to a divine original; and the claim is just, as will be seen. They are called the law, or doctrine of the Lord; the testimony of the Lord; the statutes of the Lord; the commandment of the Lord;

2 Editors note. See **Edward Stevens paper and Podcast Date Of Revelation,** in which he corrects the mistaken notions of second century writters.

the fear of the Lord; and the judgments of the Lord; by the Psalmist David, (Ps. 19:7-9). And the prophets frequently introduce their prophecies and discourses, by saying, "the word of the Lord came" to them; and with a, "thus saith the Lord", (Isa 1:10; Jer 2:1,2).

And our Lord expressly calls the scripture the word of God, (John 10:35) as it is also called, (Heb 4:12). And which God "at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake by the prophets"; and by his Son, and his apostles, in later times, (Heb 1:1, 2). And is represented as the oracles of God, and may be safely consulted and depended on; and according to which men are to speak, (Rom. 3:2, 1 Pet. 1:11). But before I proceed any further, in the proof of the divinity of the sacred Scriptures, I shall premise the following things.

First, That when we say that the Scriptures are the word of God, or that this word is of God; we do not mean that it was spoken with an articulate voice by him; or written immediately by the finger of God: the law of the Decalogue, or the Ten Commands, indeed, were articulately spoken by him, and the writing of them was the writing of God, (Ex. 20:1, 31:18, 32:15) in which he might set an example to his servants, in later times, to write what might be suggested to them by him; that it might remain to be read: it is enough, that they were bid to write what he delivered to them, as Moses and others were ordered to do, (Deut. 31:19; Jer. 30:2; Hab. 2:2; Rev. 1:11, 19) and what was ordered by the Lord to be written, it is the same as if it was written by himself; and especially since the penmen wrote as they were directed, dictated and inspired by him, and "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"; for they did not speak and write of their own head, and out of their own brains, nor according to their will, and when and what they pleased; but according to the will of God, and what he suggested to them, and when he inspired them, (2 Pet. 1:21).

Secondly, Not all that is contained in the scriptures is of God. Some are the words of others; yea, some are the speeches of Satan, and very bad ones too; as when he suggested that Job was not a sincere worshipper of God; and requested he might have leave to do an injury both to his property and to his person, (Job 1:9-11; 2:4-6). So when he tempted our Lord, and moved him to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and destroy himself; and not succeeding in that, urged him to fall down and worship him, (Matt. 4:5, 9). But now the penmen of these books, in which these speeches are, were moved and directed by the Lord to commit them to writing; so that though they themselves are not the word of God; yet that they are written, and are on record, is of God; and which was directed to, and done, to show the malice, pride, blasphemy, and impiety, of that wicked spirit. There are also speeches of bad men, as of Cain, Pharaoh, and others, ordered to be written, to discover the more the corruption of human nature: and even of good men, as of Moses, David, Jonah, and particularly the friends of Job, and their long discourses, in which they said not that which was right of God, as Job did; and he himself did not say in every speech of his what was right of God; though he said more, and what was more correct, than they did; and yet these speeches are on record, by divine order, to prove matters of fact, to show the weaknesses and frailties of the best of men. Some of the writers of thee scriptures, as Moses, and the historical ones, being eye and ear witnesses of many things they wrote, could have written them of their own knowledge, and out of their own memories; and others they might take out of diaries, annals, and journals, of their own and former times; yet in all they wrote, they were under the impulse and direction of God; what to leave, and what to take and insert into their writings, and transmit to posterity. So that all they wrote may be truly said to be by divine authority. In the writings and discourses of the apostle Paul, are several quotations out of heathen authors; one out of Aratus, when he was discoursing before the wise men at Athens; "as certain, says he, of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring", (Acts 17:28). Another out of Menander; "Evil communications corrupt good manners", (1 Cor. 15:33). And another out of Epimenides, a poet of Crete, a testimony of his against the Cretians, who said they were, "always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies"; which were produced "ad hominum", for greater conviction; and which he was directed to quote and write in his epistles and discourses, for that reason. So that though the words are not of God, yet that they were quoted and written, was of God.

Thirdly, Let it be observed, that not the matter of the Scriptures only, but the very words in which they

are written are of God. Some who are not for organic inspiration, as they call it, think that the sacred writers were only furnished of God with matter, and had general ideas of things given them, and were left to clothe them with their own words, and to use their own style; which they suppose accounts for the difference of style to be observed in them: but if this was the case, as it sometimes is with men, that they have clear and satisfactory ideas of things in their own minds, and yet are at a loss for proper words to express and convey the sense of them to others; so it might be with the sacred writers, if words were not suggested to them, as well as matter; and then we should be left at an uncertainty about the real sense of the Holy Spirit, if not led into a wrong one; it seems, therefore, most agreeable, that words also, as well as matter, were given by divine inspiration: and as for difference of style, as it was easy with God to direct to the use of proper words, so he could accommodate himself to the style such persons were wont to use, and which was natural to them, and agreeable to their genius and circumstances; and this may be confirmed from the testimonies of the writers themselves: says

David, one of the writers of the Old Testament, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue", (2 Sam. 23:2). And the apostle Paul speaks of himself, and other inspired apostles of the New Testament, he says, "Which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth", (1 Cor. 2:13) and it is "the writing", or the word of God as written, that is, "by inspiration of God", (2 Tim. 3:16). But then,

Fourthly, This is to be understood of the Scriptures, as in the original languages in which they were written, and not of translations; unless it could be thought, that the translators of the Bible into each of the languages of the nations into which it has been translated, were under the divine inspiration also in translating, and were directed of God to the use of words they have rendered the original by; but this is not reasonable to suppose. The books of the Old Testament were written chiefly in the Hebrew language, unless some few passages in Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezra, and Esther, in the Chaldee language; and the New Testament in Greek: in which languages they can only be reckoned canonical and authentic; for this is like the charters and diplomas of princes; the wills or testaments of men; or any deeds made by them; only the original exemplar is authentic; and not translations, and transcriptions, and copies of them, though ever so perfect: and to the Bible, in its original languages, is every translation to be brought, and by it to be examined, tried and judged, and to be corrected and amended: and if this was not the case, we should have no certain and infallible rule to go by; for it must be either all the translations together, or some one of them; not all of them, because they agree not in all things: not one; for then the contest would be between one nation and another which it should be, whether English, Dutch, French, &c. and could one be agreed upon, it could not be read and understood by all: so the papists, they plead for their Vulgate Latin version; which has been decreed authentic by the council of Trent; though it abounds with innumerable errors and mistakes; nay, so far do they carry this affair, that they even assert that the Scriptures, in their originals, ought to submit to, and be corrected by their version; which is absurd and ridiculous. Let not now any be uneasy in their minds about translations on this account, because they are not upon an equality with the original text, and especially about our own; for as it has been the will of God, and appears absolutely necessary that so it should be, that the Bible should be translated into different languages, that all may read it, and some particularly may receive benefit by it; he has taken care, in his providence, to raise up men capable of such a performance, in various nations, and particularly in ours; for whenever a set of men have been engaged in this work, as were in our nation, men well skilled in the languages, and partakers of the grace of God; of sound principles, and of integrity and faithfulness, having the fear of God before their eyes; they have never failed of producing a translation worthy of acceptation; and in which, though they have mistook some words and phrases, and erred in some lesser and lighter matters; yet not so as to affect any momentous article of faith or practice; and therefore such translations as ours may be regarded as the rule of faith. And if any scruple should remain on the minds of any on this account, it will be sufficient to remove it, when it is observed, that the Scriptures, in our English translation, have been blessed of God, either by reading them in it, or

by explaining them according to it, for the conversion, comfort, and edification of thousands and thousands. And the same may be said of all others, so far as they agree with the original, that they are the rule of faith and practice, and alike useful.

Here I cannot but observe the amazing ignorance and stupidity of some persons, who take it into their heads to decry learning and learned men; for what would they have done for a Bible, had it not been for them as instruments? And if they had it, so as to have been capable of reading it, God must have wrought a miracle for them; and continued that miracle in every nation, in every age, and to every individual; I mean the gift of tongues, in a supernatural way, as was bestowed upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost; which there is no reason in the world ever to have expected.

Bless God, therefore, and be thankful that God has, in his providence, raised up such men to translate the Bible into the mother tongue of every nation, and particularly into ours; and that he still continues to raise up such who are able to defend the translation made, against erroneous persons, and enemies of the truth; and to correct and amend it in lesser matters, in which it may have failed, and clear and illustrate it by their learned notes upon it. Having premised these things, I now proceed to prove the claim of the Scriptures to a divine authority, which may be evinced from the following things.

First, From the subject matter of them.

I. In general there is nothing in them unworthy of God; nothing contrary to his truth and faithfulness, to his purity and holiness, to his wisdom and goodness, or to any of the perfections of his nature; there is no falsehood nor contradiction in them; they may with great propriety be called, as they are, "The Scriptures of truth", and the "Word of truth", (Dan. 10:21; Eph 1:13). There is nothing impious or impure, absurd or ridiculous in them; as in the Al-koran of Mahomet; which is stuffed with impurities and impieties, as well as with things foolish and absurd: or as in the Pagan treatises of their gods; which abound with tales of their murders, adulteries, and thefts; and the impure rites and ceremonies, and inhuman sacrifices used in the worship of them. But,

2. The things contained in the Scriptures are pure and holy; the Holy Spirit dictated them, holy men spoke and wrote them, and they are justly called "holy Scriptures", (Rom. 1:2) and plainly show they came from the holy God. The doctrines of them are holy; they are doctrines according to godliness, and tend to promote it; they teach and influence men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly: they are indeed, by some ignorant persons, charged with licentiousness; but the charge, as it is false, it is easily removed, by observing the nature of the doctrines, and the effects of them; the precepts the Scriptures enjoin, and the worship they require, are strictly holy; the legal part of them is "holy, just, and good", (Rom. 7:12). It is holy in its own nature, and requires nothing but what is for the good of men, what is but a reasonable service to God, and what is just between man and man; it forbids whatever is evil, strikes at all sorts of sins, and sets them in a just light, exposes and condemns them. And hence it is that there is in natural men, whose carnal minds are enmity to God, such a backwardness, yea, an aversion to reading the Scriptures; because the doctrines and precepts of them are so pure and holy; they choose to read an idle romance, an impure novel, or any profane writings and histories, rather than the Bible; and from whence may be drawn no inconsiderable argument in favour of their being of God.

The style of the Scriptures is pure and holy, chaste and clean, free from all levity and obscenity, and from everything that might be offensive to the ear of the chaste and pious. And there are remarkable instances in the marginal readings of some passages in the Hebrew text, to prevent this; and care should be taken in all translations, to make use of language neat and clean; and keep up, as much as may be, to the original purity of the Scriptures.

3. There are some things recorded in the Scriptures, which could never have been known but by revelation from God himself; as particularly, with respect to the creation of the world, and the original of mankind; that the world was made out of nothing; when made, how, and in what form and order, and how long it was in making; who were the first parents of mankind, when, how, and of what made; hence, without this revelation, men have run into strange, absurd, and extravagant notions about these things. Yea, the Scriptures inform

us what was done in eternity, which none but God himself could reveal, and make known to men; as the choice of men in Christ to everlasting salvation, which was from the beginning; not of their being, nor of their conversion, nor of time; but before time, or they or the earth were, even "before the foundation of the world", (Eph 1:4). And also the council held between the divine Persons, concerning the salvation of man; for as there was a consultation held about making him, so about saving him; which may he called the "council of peace", (Zech. 6:13). When "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself", and the scheme of peace and reconciliation, and plan of salvation, were formed and agreed upon: so the covenant of grace made with Christ from eternity, on the behalf of the chosen ones; whose "goings forth in it were of old, from everlasting"; covenanting with his Father for them, and agreeing to be their Surety and Saviour; to become incarnate, and obey and suffer for them, and so work out the salvation of them; representing their persons and taking the charge and care of them, and of all blessings of grace given them, and of all promises made to them, in him, before the world began; in which covenant he was set up as Mediator, "from everlasting, or ever the earth was", (Pro. 8:22, 23; Mic. 5:2; 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3, 4).

All which could never have been known unless God himself had revealed them.

4. There are some things recorded in the Scriptures as to the future, which God only could foreknow would be, and foretell with certainty that they should be; and which have accordingly come to pass, and proves the revelation to be of God. Some of them relate to particular persons, and contingent events; as Josiah, who was prophesied of by name, as to be born to the house of David, three or four hundred years before his birth, and what he should do; "offer up the idolatrous priests on Jeroboam's altar, and burn mens bones on it"; all which exactly came to pass, see (1 King 13:2) compared with (2 King 23:17, 20). Cyrus, king of Persia, also was prophesied of by name, more than two hundred years before his birth, and what he should do; what conquests he should make, what immense riches he should possess; and that he should let the captive Jews go free, without price or reward, and give orders for the rebuilding their temple; all which was punctually fulfilled, (Isa. 44:28,

45:1-3, 13; see Ezra 1:1-4). Others relate to kingdoms and states, and what should befall them; as the Egyptians, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Assyrians, Babylonians, and others; of whose destruction Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied, and who now are no more, have not so much as a name on earth: and particularly many things are foretold concerning the Jews; as their descent into Egypt, abode and bondage there, and coming from thence with great riches; which was made known to their great ancestor Abraham, before they were, (Gen. 15:14; see Exo. 12:35, 40, 41) their captivity in Babylon, and return from thence after seventy years, (Jer. 29:10, 11 ; see Dan. 9:2) and all their miseries and afflictions in their last destruction, and present state, are prophetically described in Deuteronomy 28:1-68 and their exact case, for about nineteen hundred years, is expressed in a few words; as well as their future conversion is prophesied of (Hosea 3:4, 5). But especially the prophecies concerning Christ, are worthy of notice; his incarnation and birth of a virgin; the place where he should be born; of what nation, tribe, and family; his sufferings and death, his burial, resurrection, ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of

God: all which are plainly pointed out in prophecy; and which, with many other things relating to him, have had their exact accomplishment in him. To which might be added, predictions of the calling of the Gentiles, by many of the prophets; and the abolition of paganism in the Roman empire; the rise, power, and ruin of antichrist; which are particularly spoken of in the book of the Revelation; great part of which prophetic book has been already fulfilled.

5. There are some things in the Scriptures, which, though not contrary to reason, yet are above the capacity of men ever to have made a discovery of; as the Trinity of persons in the Godhead; whose distinct mode of subsisting is mysterious to us; the eternal, generation of the Son of God, which is ineffable by us; his incarnation and birth of a virgin, under the power of the Holy Ghost, which is wonderful and amazing; the union of the human nature to his divine person; which is, "without controversy, the great mystery of godliness": the regeneration of men by the Spirit of God, and the manner of his operation on the souls of

men; which, on hearing of, made a master of Israel say, "How can these things be?" and the resurrection of the same body at the last day, reckoned by the Gentiles incredible; and which things, though revealed, are not to be accounted for upon the principles of nature and reason.

6. The things contained in the Scriptures, whether doctrines or facts, are harmonious; the doctrines, though delivered at sundry times, and in divers manners, are all of a piece; no yea and nay, no discord and disagreement among them; the two Testaments "are like two young roes that are twins"; to which some think they are compared in Song of Solomon 4:5, 7:3 and to the Cherubim over the mercy seat, which were of one beaten piece, were exactly alike, and looked to one another, and both to the mercy seat; a type of Christ, who is the foundation of the apostles and prophets, in which they unite, and both agree to lay; the apostle Paul said none other things than what Moses and the prophets did say should be. And as to historical facts, what seeming contradictions may be observed in any of them, are easily reconciled, with a little care, diligence, and study; and some of these arise from the carelessness of transcribers putting one word or letter for another; and even these instances are but few, and not very material; and which never affect any article of faith or practice: such care has divine providence taken of these peculiar and important writings, which with the harmony of them show them to be of God.

Secondly, The style and manner in which the Scriptures are written, is a further evidence of their divine original; the majesty in which they appear, the authoritative manner in which they are delivered; not asking, but demanding, attention and assent unto them; and which commands reverence and acceptance of them; the figures used to engage hereunto are inimitable by creatures; and such as would be daring and presumptuous for any but God to use, with whom is terrible majesty; such as, "Hear, O heavens", and "I will speak", (Deut. 32:1; Isa. 1:2) the sublimity of the style is such as exceeds all other writings: Longinus, an heathen orator, who wrote "upon the Sublime", admired some passages in the writings of Moses, particularly (Gen. 1:3). That early composition, the book of Job, abounds with such strong and lofty expressions as are not to be found in human writings, especially the speeches Jehovah himself delivered out of the whirlwind, (Job 38:1-41:34) the book of Psalms is full of bright figures and inimitable language, particularly see (Ps. 18:7- 15, 29:3-10, 113:3-8, 139:7-12). The prophecies of Isaiah are fraught with a rich treasure of divine elocution, which surpasses all that is to be met with in the writings of men; and it is remarkable, that in some of the inspired writers, who have been bred up in a rustic manner, are found some of the most grand images, and lively picturesque, and highest flights of language, as in Amos the herdman, (Amos 4:13, 9:2,6).

Thirdly, Another argument for the divine authority of the Scriptures may be taken from the penmen and writers of them.

1. Many of these were men of no education, in a low station of life, and were taken from the flock, or from the herd, or from their nets, or other mean employments; and what they wrote, both as to matter and manner, were above and beyond their ordinary capacities, and therefore must be of God; what they wrote could not be of themselves; but they "spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost".

2. They lived in different times and places, and were of different interests and capacities, and in different conditions and circumstances; and yet they were all of the same sentiment, they speak and write the same things, deliver out the same truths and doctrines, and enjoin the same moral duties of religion, and the same positive precepts, according to the different dispensations under which they were; and this shows that they were dictated, and influenced in all, by the same Spirit of God.

3. They were holy and good men, partakers of the grace of God; and therefore could never give into an imposture, nor deliver out a known lie, nor obtrude a falsehood upon the world.

4. They appear to be plain, honest, and faithful men; they conceal not their own failings and infirmities; so Moses published his own weaknesses and mistakes, and spared not the blemishes of his family; not of his more remote ancestor Levi, in the case of the Shechemites; nor of his immediate parents, their illegal marriage; nor of his favourite people the Israelites, their rebellion and obstinacy, and idolatry:

and the same may be observed of other inspired writers.

5. They were disinterested men; they sought not popular applause, nor worldly wealth, nor to aggrandize themselves and their families. Moses, when it was offered to him, by the Lord, to make of him a great nation, and cut off the people of Israel for their sins, refused it more than once; preferring the public good of that people to his own advantage; and though he was king in Jeshurun, he was not careful to have any of his posterity to succeed him in his office; and though the priesthood was conferred on Aaron his brother, and his sons, yet no other provision was made for his own family, than to attend the lower services of the tabernacle in common with the rest of his tribe: and of this disposition were the apostles of Christ, who left all, and followed him; and sought not the wealth of men, nor honour from them; but, on the contrary, exposed themselves to reproach, poverty, vexation, and trouble; yea, to persecution, and death itself; which they would never have done, had they not been fully satisfied of their mission of God, and of their message from him; and therefore could not be deterred from speaking and writing in his name, by the terrors and menaces of men, and by all the afflictions, bonds, and persecution, and death in every shape, which awaited them. In short, the writers of the Scriptures seem to be men that neither could be imposed upon themselves, nor sought to impose on others; nor would it have been easy, had they been bad men, to have succeeded, had they attempted it.

Fourthly, Another argument may be drawn from the many wonderful effects the

sacred writings, attended with a divine power and influence, have had upon the hearts and lives of men. Many have been converted from error, superstition, and idolatry, and from a vicious course of life, to embrace and profess the truth, and to live a holy life and conversation, upon reading the Scriptures, or hearing them explained; and even some of great natural parts and learning, who could not easily be prevailed upon to relinquish former tenets and practices, had they not had full and clear conviction of them. This "Word of God has been quick and powerful, sharper than a twoedged sword"; it has pierced and penetrated into the recesses of the heart, and laid open the secrets of it; it has been the means of enlightening the mind, quickening the soul, regenerating and sanctifying the heart, and of producing faith, and every other, grace in it, and of strengthening, comforting, and reviving the spirits of the people of God when in distress, by afflictions, or Satanâ€™s temptations; so that every good man has a testimony within himself of its divine authority; see (1 John 5:9,10).

Fifthly, The testimony bore to the Scriptures by miracles, abundantly confirm the genuineness of them, and that they are of God; such as were done by Moses, and the prophets of the Old Testament, and by the apostles of the New; even such as are above, and contrary to the laws of nature, and are beyond the power of a creature to perform, and which only Omnipotence itself could work: now these God would never do to establish the character of impostors, or to confirm a lie; which yet he has done to witness the truth of divine revelation; see (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3,4).

Sixthly, The hatred and opposition of men, and the enmity of devils, to them, afford no inconsiderable argument in favour of the divinity of them; for were they of men, they would not have such a disgust at them, and disapprobation of them, and make such opposition to them: by this are to be known the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error; what is of the world, and merely human, is approved by the men of the world; but what is of God is rejected, (1 John 4:5, 6) and if these writings were of Satan, and the work of forgery, imposture, and deceit, that wicked spirit would never have shown such despite unto them, nor have taken such pains to tempt men, and prevail upon them not to read them; and to persuade others to use their utmost efforts to corrupt or destroy them, and root them out of the world.

Seventhly, The awful judgments of God on such who have despised them, and have endeavoured to destroy them, are no mean evidence that they are of God; who hereby has shown his resentment of such conduct and behaviour; which might be illustrated by the instances of Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, who cut to pieces the copies of the book of the law wherever he found them, and burnt them, and put to death all with whom they were, "59Now the five and twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God. 60At

which time according to the commandment they put to death certain women, that had caused their children to be circumcised." (1 Maccabees 1) this man died of a violent disorder in his bowels, his body was covered with worms, his flesh flaked off, and was attended with an intolerable stench, "But the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, smote him with an incurable and invisible plague: or as soon as he had spoken these words, a pain of the bowels that was remediless came upon him, and sore torments of the inner parts;" (2 Maccabees 9:5) "So that the worms rose up out of the body of this wicked man, and whiles he lived in sorrow and pain, his flesh fell away, and the filthiness of his smell was noisome to all his army." (2 Maccabees 9:9) and of Dioclesian, the Roman emperor, who by an edict ordered all the sacred books to be burnt, that, if possible, he might root Christianity out of the world; and once fancied that he had done it; but when he found he had not accomplished his design, through madness and despair, in the height of his imperial glory, abdicated the empire, and retired to a private life, and at last poisoned himself: the one showed a despite to the books of the Old Testament, the other more especially to the books of the New Testament; and both were highly resented by the divine Being, who hereby showed himself the author of both. Many more instances might be produced, but these may suffice.

Eighthly, The antiquity and continuance of these writings may be improved into an argument in favour of them: Tertullian says, "That which is most ancient is most true." Men from the beginning had knowledge of God, and of the way of salvation, and in what manner God was to be worshipped; which could not be without a revelation; though for some time it was not delivered in writing. The antediluvian patriarchs had it, and so the postdiluvian ones, to the times of Moses; whose writings are the first, and are more ancient than any profane writings, by many hundreds of years; the most early of that sort extant, are the poems of Homer and Hesiod, who flourished about the times of Isaiah; and the divine writings have been preserved notwithstanding the malice of men and devils, some of them some thousands of years, when other writings are lost and perished.

To which may be added, that the Scriptures receive no small evidence of the authority of them, from the testimonies of many heathen writers agreeing with them, with respect to the chronology, geography, and history of them; as concerning the creation of the world, Noahâ's flood, the tower of Babel, the confusion of languages, the peopling the earth by the sons of Noah, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah; with many other things respecting the people of Israel, their origin, laws, &c.[l] I go on to consider,

II. The "Perfection" of the Scriptures. When we assert the perfection of them, we do not mean that they contain a perfect account of all that God has done from the beginning of time, in the dispensations of his providence in the world, and in the distributions of his grace to the sons of men; though they relate much of the state and condition of the church of God in all ages, and as it will be to the end of time.

Nor that they contain all the discourses, exhortations, admonitions, cautions, and counsels of the prophets, delivered to the people of Israel, in each of the ages of time: nor all the sermons of the apostles, which they preached to the Jews, and among the Gentiles: nor are all that were said and done by our Lord Jesus Christ recorded in them; there were many signs done by him which are not written, which if they should be written, as the evangelist observes, "even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written", (John 20:30, 21:25). But then they relate all things necessary to salvation, everything that ought to be believed and done; and are a complete, perfect standard of faith and practice: which may be proved,

First, From the Author of them, who is God; they are the word of God, and are "given by inspiration of God;" as is asserted in them, and has been clearly shown.

Now since God is the author of them, who is a perfect Being, in whom is "no darkness at all"; not of ignorance, error, and imperfection; they coming from him, must be free from everything of that kind; "he is a rock", and "his work is perfect"; as his works of creation, providence, and redemption; so this work of the Scriptures.

Secondly, From the name they go by, a "Testament": we commonly divide the Scriptures into the Books of the Old Testament, and the Books of the New

Testament; and that there was a First and a Second Testament, an Old and a New one, is plainly intimated, (Heb. 9:15). Now a man's testament, or will, contains the whole of his will and pleasure, concerning the disposition of his estate to whomsoever he pleases, or it is not properly his will and testament; a man's testament, "if it be confirmed", as the apostle observes, "no man disannulled or addeth thereto", (Gal. 3:15). Such the Scriptures are; they contain the whole will of God, about the disposition of the blessings of grace, and of the heavenly inheritance, to those who are appointed by him heirs; and being ratified and confirmed by the blood of Christ, are so sure and firm as not to be disannulled, and so perfect that nothing can be added thereunto.

Thirdly, From the epithet of "perfect" being expressly given unto them; "the law of the Lord is perfect", (Ps. 19:7) which is to be understood, not of the Decalogue, or Ten Commands, but of the doctrine of the Lord, as the phrase signifies; even what was delivered in the sacred writings extant in the times of David; and if it was perfect then as to the substance of it, then much more must it appear so by the accession of the prophets, and the books of the New Testament since, in which there are plainer and clearer discoveries of the mind and will of God.

Fourthly, From the essential parts of them, the Law and Gospel; to which two heads the substance of them may be reduced: the Law is a perfect rule of duty; it contains what is the "good, acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). What he would have done, or not done; the whole duty of man, both towards God and man; all is comprehended in these two commands, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c. and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:37-40). The Gospel is the "perfect law", or doctrine "of liberty", the apostle James speaks of, (James 1:25) which proclaims the glorious liberty of the children of God by Christ; and it is perfect, it treats of perfect things; of perfect justification by Christ; of full pardon of sin through his blood, and complete salvation in him; and contains a perfect plan of truth; every truth, "as it is in Jesus"; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: it is the whole, or all the counsel of God, concerning the spiritual and eternal salvation of men (Acts 20:27).

Fifthly, From the integral parts of them; the Scriptures, containing all the books that were written by divine inspiration. The books of the Old Testament were complete and perfect in the times of Christ; not one was wanting, nor any mutilated and corrupted. The Jews, he says, "have Moses and the prophets"; and he himself, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself" (Luke 16:31, 24:27). So that they had not only the five books of Moses, but "all" the prophets, and "all" the scriptures of the Old Testament: nay, he affirms, that "till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled", (Matt. 5:18). The Jews had the oracles of God committed to their care, (Rom. 3:2) and they have been faithful keepers of them, even some of them to superstition and scrupulous nicety, numbering not only the books and sections, but also the verses, and even the words and letters: and there never was nor now is, any reason to be given why they had corrupted, or would corrupt, any part of the Old Testament; on the coming of Christ it was not their interest to do it; and even before that it was translated into the Greek tongue, by which they would have been detected; and after the coming of Christ they could not do it if they would, copies of it being in the hands of Christians; who were able to correct what they should corrupt, had they done it: and whatever attempts may have been made by any under the Christian name, to corrupt some copies of either Testament, they may be, and have been detected; or whatever mistakes may be made, through the carelessness of transcribers of copies, they are to be corrected by other copies, which God, in his providence, has preserved; and, as it seems, for such purposes: so that we have a perfect canon, or rule of faith and practice. It is objected to the perfection of the books of the Old Testament, that the books of Nathan, Gad, and Iddo, the prophets mentioned therein, are lost; but then it should be proved that these were inspired writings, and, indeed, that they are lost; they may be the same, as some think, with the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles.

And it is also objected to those of the New Testament, that there was an epistle from Laodicea, (Col. 4:16) and another to the Corinthians, distinct from those we have (1 Cor. 5:9) neither of them now

extant: as to the first, that is not an epistle "to" Laodicea, but "from" it; and may refer to one of the epistles, we have, written by the apostle Paul, when at that place: and as to that to the Corinthians, it does not appear to be another and distinct, but the same he was then writing: but admitting, for argument sake, though it is not to be granted, that some book, or part of the inspired writings is lost; let it be proved, if it can, that any essential article of faith is lost with it; or that there is any such article of faith wanting in the books we have: if this cannot be proved, then, notwithstanding the pretended defect, we have still a perfect rule of faith; which is what is contended for.

Sixthly, This may be further evinced from the charge that is given, "not to add unto, nor diminish from, any part of the sacred writings, law or gospel": this is strictly enjoined the Israelites to observe, with respect to the law, and the commandments of it, given them by Moses (Deut. 4:2, 12:32). And with respect to the Gospel, the apostle Paul says, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you and ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8, 9). And the wise man, or Agur, says of the Scriptures in his time, "Every word of God is pure" add thou not unto his words". And the apostle and evangelist John, closes the canon of the Scripture with these remarkable words, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life", &c. (Rev. 22:18, 19). Now if there is nothing superfluous in the Scriptures, to be taken from them; and nothing defective in them, which requires any addition to them; then they must be perfect.

Seventhly, This may be argued from the sufficiency of them to answer the ends and purposes for which they are written; as, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness", (2 Tim. 3:16) they are sufficiently profitable and useful "for doctrine"; there is no spiritual truth, nor evangelical doctrine, but what they contain; they are called "the Scriptures of truth"; not only because they come from the God of truth, and whatsoever is in them is truth; but they contain "all truth"; which the Spirit of God, the dictator of them, guides into, and that by means of them; (see Dan. 10:21; John 16:13) every doctrine is to be confirmed and established by them: our Lord proved the things concerning himself, his person, office, sufferings, and death, by them, (Luke 24:25-27) the apostle Paul "reasoned out of the Scriptures", in confirmation and defence of the doctrines he taught; "opening and alleging", that is, from the Scriptures, "that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus is Christ", whom he preached; and, indeed, he said "none other things than what Moses and the prophets did say" should be, and which he was able to prove from thence (Acts 17:2, 3, 26:22, 23). Every doctrine proposed by men, to the assent of others, is not immediately to be credited; but to be tried and proved, and judged of by the holy Scriptures, which are to be searched, as they were by the Bereans, to see whether those things be so or not; and being found agreeable to them, they are to be believed, and held fast; for "to the law and to the testimony; if men speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). See 1 John 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; Acts 17:11 and these are serviceable "for reproof", for the detection, confutation, and conviction of error: thus Christ confuted the error of the Sadducees by the Scriptures (Matt. 22:29, 30) and the apostles, with these, warred a good warfare; these were their spiritual weapons, the word of God is the sword of the Spirit, they used in fighting the good fight of faith, against false teachers; by sound doctrine, fetched from thence, they were able to convince and stop the mouths of gainsayers: there never was an error, or heresy, broached in the world yet, but what has been confuted by the Scriptures; and it is not possible that anyone can arise in opposition to "the faith once delivered", but what may receive its refutation from them. They are also of use "for correction" of every sin, internal or external; of heart, lip, and life, secret or open; sins of omission or commission; all are forbidden, reproved, and condemned by the law of God; which says, "Thou shalt not covet", nor do this, and that, and the other iniquity (Rom. 7:7, 13:9). And the Gospel agrees with the law herein; and what is contrary to the law, is to sound doctrine; the Gospel of the grace of God, teaches to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts" (1 Tim. 1:9-11;

Titus 2:11, 12). There is not a sin that can be named, but what the Scriptures inveigh against, forbid, and correct. And another end answered by them is, that they are "for instruction in righteousness", in every moral duty of religion, and in every positive precept of God, according to the different dispensations; they instruct in everything of a moral or positive nature, and direct to observe all that is commanded of God and Christ; and now writings by which all such ends are answered, must needs be perfect and complete. The Scriptures are sufficient to "make a man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnish him unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:17). Not a private good man only, but one in a public character and office; a prophet, a preacher, and minister of the word; in which sense the phrase is used both in the Old and New Testament (1 Sam. 9:6, 7; 1 Tim 6:11). An acquaintance with these fits him for the work of the ministry, and furnishes him with sound doctrine, to deliver out to the edification of others; by means of these he becomes "a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God; and to be able to bring out of his treasure things new and old": and if they are able to make such a man perfect, they must be perfect themselves.

Another use of the Scriptures, and an end to be, and which is, answered by them, is not only the learning and instruction of private men, as well as those of a public character; but to make them patient under afflictions, and comfort them in them, and give hope of deliverance out of them, as well as of eternal salvation hereafter; for the apostle says, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). Nor is there any afflictive circumstance a good man can come into, but there is a promise in the word of God suitable to him in it; and which may be a means of enlivening, cheering, and comforting him, (Ps. 119:49, 50) yea, the Scriptures are written to promote and increase the spiritual joy of God's people, and that that joy might be full, and therefore must be full and perfect themselves (1 John 1:3, 4).

Eightly, The Scriptures are able to make a man "wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15). One part of them being the gospel of salvation; which points out to men the way of salvation; gives an account of Christ, the author of it, and of the salvation itself wrought out by him; and describes the persons that have an interest in it, and shall enjoy it; and who, through the grace of God, are made wise enough to see their need of it, seek after it, and embrace it; for it is not barely by reading the word they become so wise; but through the Spirit of wisdom and revelation opening their eyes to see what is contained in it, and applying it to them; whereby the gospel becomes "the power of God unto salvation" to them. In short the Scriptures contain all things in them necessary to be believed, unto salvation; and, indeed, they are written for this end, that men "might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, they might have life through his name" (John 20:31) and hereby, under a divine influence and blessing, they come to have the knowledge of God and Christ, and of God in Christ; which is the beginning, earnest, and pledge of eternal life (John 17:3). I proceed,

3. To prove the "perspicuity" of the Scriptures; for since they are a rule of faith and practice, they should be clear and plain, as they are: not that they are all equally clear and plain; some parts of them, and some things in them, are dark and obscure; but then by comparing spiritual things with spiritual, or those more dark passages with those that are clearer, they may be plainly understood. Moreover, the light of the Scriptures has been a growing one; it was but dim under the dispensation of the law of Moses; it became more clear through the writings of the prophets; but most clear under the gospel dispensation; where, "as in a glass, we behold, with open face, the glory of the Lord"; and of divine things: though in the gospel dispensation, and in such clear writings and epistles as those of the apostle Paul, who used "great plainness of speech", there are some things "hard to be understood", see 2 Corinthians 3:12-18; 2 Peter 3:16. And this is so ordered on purpose to remove all contempt and loathing of the Scriptures, and to humble the arrogance and pride of men, to engage reverence of them, and to excite attention to them, and to put men on searching them with close study, application, and prayer. Nor is every doctrine of the Scriptures expressed in so many words; as the doctrine of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead; the eternal generation of the Son of God, his incarnation and satisfaction, &c. but then

the things themselves signified by them are clear and plain; and there are terms and phrases answerable to them; or they are to be deduced from thence by just and necessary consequences. Nor are the Scriptures clear and plain to everyone that reads them; they are a sealed book, which neither learned nor unlearned men can understand and interpret without the Spirit of God, the dictator of them; the natural man, by the mere light of nature, and dint of reason, though he may understand the grammatical sense of words; yet he does not understand the meaning of them, at least in a spiritual way, with application to himself; and so far as he has any notion of them, he has a disgust and contempt of them, for the most part; yet they are so fully expressed and clearly revealed, that if the gospel is hid to any, it is to those that perish, who are left to the native darkness of their minds, and to be "blinded by the god of this world", that the glorious light of the gospel might not shine into them, see Isaiah 29:11,12; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4. But then the Scriptures are plain to them that have a spiritual understanding; who are spiritual men, and judge all things; "to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom". What are more clear and plain than the precepts of the law, commanding one thing to be done, and forbidding the doing of another? in what plain language are they expressed, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me, &c.", "Thou shalt not kill, &c.?" And how clearly is asserted the great and fundamental doctrine of the gospel, "That salvation is alone by Jesus Christ, through the free grace of God; and not of the works of men?" and so everything necessary of belief unto salvation. In short, as Gregory says [2], they are like a full and deep river, in which the lamb may walk, and the elephant swim, in different places.

The perspicuity of the Scriptures may be argued,

1. From the author of them, God, as has been proved, who is "the Father of lights"; and therefore what comes from him must be light and clear, in whom is "no darkness at all".

2. From the several parts of them, and what they are compared unto. The law, or legal part of them, is represented by things which are light, and give it; "The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light" (Pro. 6:23). The commandments of the law, as before observed, are clearly expressed; and are a plain direction to men what to do, or shun; the same David says of the word of the Lord in general, and more explicitly, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). directing how to walk and act. The evangelical part of the Scriptures, or the gospel, is compared to a "glass", in which may be clearly beheld, "the glory of the Lord"; of his person, offices, grace, and righteousness; and everyone of the glorious truths and doctrines of it (2 Cor. 3:18). Hence the ministers of the word are called the light of the world; because by opening and explaining the Scriptures, they are instruments of enlightening men into the will of God, and the mysteries of his grace (Matt. 5:14).

3. From other testimonies of Scripture, particularly from Deuteronomy 30:11-14. "For this commandment, which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee; neither is it far off. It is not in heaven,neither is it beyond the sea but the word is very nigh unto thee; in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it". And if it is not hidden, nor at a distance and inaccessible, then it must be open, and the knowledge of it to be come at; and this is to be understood, not only of the law of Moses, but more especially of the gospel, the word of faith, preached by the apostles, as the apostle Paul interprets it (Rom. 10:6-8). And the whole of Scripture is the "sure word of prophecy; whereunto men do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place": and so the means of dispelling the darkness of ignorance, error, and unbelief; and of giving light all around, both with respect to doctrine and duty, see 2 Peter 1:19.

4. From exhortations to all sorts of people to read them, and who are commended for so doing. Not only the kings of Israel were to read the law of the Lord, but all that people in general; and there was a certain time of the year for them to assemble together to hear it read, men, women, children, and strangers; but if it was not plain and clear, and easy to be understood, it would have been to no purpose for them to attend it (Deut. 17:19; 31:11-13). Our Lord advises to "search the Scriptures"; which supposes them legible and intelligible, (John 5:39) and the Bereans are commended as more noble than those of Thessalonica; because they searched the Scriptures daily, and compared what they heard with them; that

they might know whether they were right or not (Acts 17:11; see Rev. 1:3).

5. From all sorts of persons being capable of reading them, and hearing them read, so as to understand them. Thus in the times of Nehemiah and Ezra, persons of every sex and age, who were at years of maturity, and had the exercise of their rational faculties, had the law read unto them, (Neh. 8:3) Timothy, from a child, knew the holy Scriptures, (2 Tim. 3:15) believers, and regenerate persons of every rank and degree, have knowledge of them, whether fathers, young men, or little children, (1 John 2:12, 2:13, 14). Nor is the public preaching of the word, and the necessity of it, to be objected to all this; since that is, as for conversion, so for greater edification and comfort, and for establishment in the truth, even though it is known; and besides, serves to lead into a larger knowledge of it, and is the ordinary means of guiding into it, and of arriving to a more perfect acquaintance with it, (1 Cor. 14:3; 2 Pet. 1:12; Acts 8:30, 31; Eph. 4:11-13). So that it may be concluded, upon the whole, that the Scriptures are easily understood.

A sure, certain, and infallible rule to go by, with respect to things both to be believed and done: a rule they are (Gal. 6:16). And since they are of divine authority, and are perfect and plain, they are a sure rule, and to be depended on; "The testimony of the Lord is sure", (Ps. 19:7) and a "more sure word of prophecy" than all others whatever, (2 Pet. 1:19) these are the witness of God, and therefore greater than man's; and to be believed before any human testimony, (1 John 5:9) yea, must be reckoned infallible, since they are the Scriptures of truth, and not only contain what is truth, and nothing but truth in them: but have a true, even a divine testimony bore unto them, and come from the God of truth, who cannot lie (Dan. 10:21; Tit 1:2). They are the judge of all religious controversies, to which all are to be brought, and by them determined; according to these, spiritual men, who have their senses exercised, to discern between good and evil, try and judge all things. The Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture, or the Spirit of God therein; nor are the church or its pastors, nor councils and popes, the infallible interpreters thereof; there is a private interpretation of Scripture, which every Christian may make, according to his ability and light; and there is a public one, by the preacher of the word but both are subject to, and to be determined by the Scripture itself, which is the only certain and infallible rule of faith and practice. And,

IV. There seems to be a real "necessity" of such a rule in the present state of things; and, indeed, a divine revelation was necessary to Adam, in a state of innocence; how, otherwise, should he have known anything of the manner of his creation; of the state and condition in which he was created, after the image and in the likeness of God; the extent of his power and authority over the creation; by what means his animal life was to be supported; in what manner God was to be served and worshipped by him, especially the parts of positive and instituted worship, both as to matter, time, and place; and particularly the will of God, as to abstinence from eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil? And if our first parents stood in need of a divine revelation, as a rule and guide to them in their state of integrity; then much more we in our present state of ignorance and depravity. And after the fall, it was owing to divine revelation, that man had any knowledge of the way of his salvation, by the woman's seed; and of the appointment, nature, import, use, and end of sacrifices; and though this revelation was for a time unwritten, and was handed down by tradition to the patriarchs before the flood, and for some time after, while the lives of men were of a long continuance, and it required but few hands to transmit it from one to another; but when men's lives were shortened, and it was the pleasure of God to make further and clearer discoveries of his mind and will, and to frame new laws and rules of worship, in different dispensations; it seemed proper and necessary to commit them to writing, both that they might remain, and that they might be referred to in case of any doubt or difficulty about them; and particularly that the ends before mentioned might be answered by them, which it was intended should be; namely, the learning and instruction of men in matters of faith and practice, their peace, comfort, and edification, (Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:15-17) and the rather, since nothing else was, and nothing less than the Scriptures are, a sufficient rule and guide in matters of religion; even not the light of nature and reason, so much talked of, and so highly exalted; and since

it has been set up as such against divine revelation, it may be proper to show the insufficiency of it. Now the light of nature or reason, is not to be taken in an abstract sense, or considered only in theory, what it has been, may be, or should be, but not subsisting in men or books; as such it can be no rule or guide at all to have recourse unto; and besides, reason in such sense is not opposed to revelation; there is nothing in revelation contrary to reason, though there are things above it, and of which it is not a competent judge, and therefore can be no guide in such matters; but it must be considered as it is in fact, and as it subsists, either in single individuals, or in whole bodies of men, and these unacquainted with, and unassisted by divine revelation; and then its sufficiency, or rather insufficiency, will soon appear. If it is considered as in individuals, it may easily be observed it is not alike in all, but differs, according to the circumstances of men, climate, constitution, education, &c. some have a greater share of it than others; and what is agreeable to the reason of one man, is not so to another; and therefore unless it was alike and equal in all, it can be no sure rule or guide to go by: let one of the most exalted genius, be chosen, one of the wisest and sagest philosophers of the Gentiles, that has studied nature most, and arrived to the highest degree of reason and good sense; for instance, let Socrates be the man, who is sometimes magnified as "divine", and in whom the light of nature and reason may be thought to be sublimated and raised to its highest degree, in the Gentile world, without the help of revelation; and yet, as it was in him, it must be a very deficient rule of faith and practice; for though he asserted the unity of the divine Being, and is said to die a martyr for it; yet he was not clear of the heathenish notions of inferior deities, and of worship to be given them; for one of the last things spoken by him was, to desire his friends to fulfil a vow of his, to offer a cock to Esculapius, the god of health; and he is most grievously slandered, if he was not guilty of the love of boys in an unnatural way; and besides, he himself bewails the weakness and darkness of human nature, and confessed the want of a guide. If the light of nature and reason be considered in large bodies of men, in whole nations, it will appear not to be the same in all. Some under the guidance of it have worshipped one sort of deities, and some others; have gone into different modes of worship, and devised different rites and ceremonies, and followed different customs and usages, and even differed in things of a moral nature; and as their forefathers, guided by this light, introduced and established the said things; they, with all their observations, reflections, and reasonings on them, or increase of light, supposing they had any, were never able, by the light of nature and reason in them, to prevail over, and demolish such idolatry, and such profane and wicked practices that obtained among them; and the insufficiency thereof, as a rule and guide in religion, will further appear by considering the following particulars.

1. That there is a God may be known by the light of nature; but "who" and "what" he is, men, destitute of a divine revelation, have been at a loss about. Multitudes have gone into polytheism, and have embraced for gods almost everything in and under the heavens; not only the sun, moon, and stars, and mortal men, they have deified; but various sorts of beasts, fishes, fowl, creeping things, and even forms of such that never existed: and some that have received the notion of a supreme Being, yet have also acknowledged a numerous train of inferior deities, and have worshipped the creature besides the Creator; whose folly is represented in a true and full light by the apostle, (Rom. 1:19-25) and though the unity of the divine Being, is the voice of reason as well as of revelation; yet by the former, without the latter, we could have had no certain notion, if any at all, of three divine persons subsisting in the unity of the divine essence; and especially of each of the parts they have taken in the economy of man's salvation; for as for what Plato and others have been supposed to say concerning a Trinity, it is very lame and imperfect, and what was borrowed from eastern tradition.

2. Though the light of nature may teach men that God, their Creator and Benefactor, is to be worshipped by them; and may direct them to some parts of worship, as to pray unto him for what they want, and praise him for what they have received; yet a perfect plan of worship, acceptable to God, could never have been formed according to that; and especially that part of it could not have been known which depends upon the arbitrary will of God, and consists of positive precepts and institutions; hence the Gentiles, left to

that, and without a divine revelation, have introduced modes of worship the most absurd and ridiculous, as well as cruel and bloody, even human sacrifices, and the slaughter of their own children, as well as the most shocking scenes of debauchery and uncleanness.

3. By the light of nature men may know that they are not in the same condition and circumstances they originally were; for when they consider things, they cannot imagine that they were made by a holy Being subject to such irregular passions and unruly lusts which now prevail in them; but in what state they were made, and how they fell from that estate, and came into the present depraved one, they know not; and still less how to get out of it, and to be cured of their irregularities: but divine revelation informs us how man was made upright, and like unto God: and by what means he fell from his uprightness into the sinful state he is in; and how he may be recovered from it, and brought out of it by the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit of God, and not otherwise.

4. Though, as the apostle says, the Gentiles without the law, "do by nature the things contained in the law; and are a law to themselves, which show the work of the law written on their hearts; their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another", (Rom. 2:14, 15) and so have some notion of the difference between moral good and evil; yet this is not so clear and extensive, but that some of the greatest moralists among them gave into the most notorious vices, and allowed of them, and recommended them; Chrysippus [3] allowed of incest; Plato[4] commended community of wives; Socrates a plurality of wives, and which he enforced by his own example[5]; Cicero[6] pleaded for fornication; the Stoics, a grave set of moralists, for the use of obscene words[7], and recommended suicide as becoming a wise man[8], and as his duty to commit in some cases. So dim was this light of nature in things of a moral kind!

5. Though in many cases reason taught them that certain vices were disagreeable to God, and resented by him, and he was displeased with them, and would punish for them; and they were very desirous of appeasing him; but then how to reconcile him to them, and recommend themselves to his favour, they were quite ignorant; and therefore took the most shocking and detestable methods for it, as human sacrifices, and particularly burning their innocent infants. But revelation shows us the more excellent way.

6. Men may, by the light of nature, have some notion of sin as an offence to God, and of their need of forgiveness from him; and from a general notion of his mercy, and of some instances of kindness to them, may entertain some faint hope of the pardon of it; but then they cannot be certain of it from thence, or that even God will pardon sin at all, the sins of any man; and still less how this can be done consistent with his holiness and justice: but through divine revelation we come at a clear and certain knowledge of this doctrine, and of its consistence with the divine perfections.

7. The light of nature leaves men entirely without the knowledge of the way of salvation by the Son of God. And even without revelation, angels of themselves would not be able to know the way of saving sinful men, or how sinful men can be justified before God; wherefore, in order to know this; they "desire to look into it", (1 Pet. 1:12). Some have thought that Socrates had some notion of it; who is made to say[9], "It is necessary to wait till some one teaches how to behave towards God and men:" but then this respects only a man's outward conduct, and not his salvation: nor does the philosopher seem to have any clear notion of the instructor, and of the means he should use to instruct, and still less of the certainty of his coming; and besides, the relator of this, Plato, might receive this as a tradition in the East, where it is well known he travelled for knowledge. But the divine revelation gives an account of this glorious person, not merely as an instructor of men in the way of their duty, but as a Saviour of them from their sins; and in what way he has wrought out salvation, by his sacrifice, blood, and righteousness.

5. The light of nature is far from giving any clear and certain account of the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and a future state of happiness and misery: as for the immortality of the soul, the heathens rather wished it to be true than were fully satisfied of it; they that were for it made use of but mean arguments to prove it; and they themselves believed it only "fide dimidiata", as Minutius Felix[10] expresses it, with a divided faith; they did, as it were,

but half believe it; and as for the resurrection of the body, that was denied, as Tertullian says[ll], by every sect of the philosophers: and in what a low manner do they represent the happiness of the future state; by walking in pleasant fields, by sitting under fragrant arbours or bowers, and cooling shades, and by shelter from inclement weather; by viewing flowing fountains and purling and babbling streams; by carnal mirth, feasting, music, and dancing: and the misery of it, by being bound neck and heels together, or in chains, or fastened to rocks, and whipped by furies, with a scourge of serpents, or doomed to some laborious service. But not the least hint is given of the presence of God with the one, nor of his absence from the other; nor of any sensation of his love or wrath. Let us therefore bless God that we have a better rule and guide to go by; "a more sure word of prophecy to take heed unto": let us have constant recourse unto it, as the standard of faith and practice; and try every doctrine and practice by it, and believe and act as that directs us, and fetch everything from it that may be for our good, and the glory of God.

Chapter 3

OF THE NAMES OF GOD

Being about to treat of God, and of the things of God, it may be proper to begin with his names: the names of persons and things are usually the first that are known of them; and if these are not known, it cannot be thought that much, if any thing, is known of them; and where the name of God is not known, he himself cannot be known; and the rather the consideration of his name, or names, is worthy of regard, because they serve to lead into some knowledge of his nature and perfections; and therefore a proper introduction to such a subject. Indeed, properly speaking, since God is incomprehensible, he is not nominable; and being but one, he has no need of a name to distinguish him; and therefore Plato says, he has no name; and hence he commonly calls him to ov , "Ens", "The Being". So when Moses asked the Lord, what he should say to the children of Israel, should they ask the name of him that sent him to them, he bid him say, "I am that I am"; that is, The eternal Being, the Being of beings; which his name Jehovah is expressive of: nevertheless, there are names of God in the Scriptures taken from one or other of his attributes, which are worthy of consideration.

The names of God, as Zanchy observes, some of them respect him as the subject, as Jehovah, Lord, God: others are predicates, what are spoken of him, or attributed to him, as holy, just, good, &c. Some respect the relation the divine Persons in the Godhead stand in to each other, as Father, Son, and Spirit: others the relation of God to the creatures; and which are properly said of him, and not them, as Creator, Preserver, Governor, &c. some are common to the Three divine persons, as Jehovah, God, Father, Spirit; and some peculiar to each, as the epithets of unbegotten, begotten, proceeding from the Father and the Son: some are figurative and metaphorical, taken from creatures, to whom God is compared; and others are proper names, by which he either calls himself, or is called by the prophets and apostles, in the books of the Old and New Testament; which are what will be particularly considered.

1. "Elohim" is the first name of God we meet with in Scripture, and is translated God, (Gen. 1:1) and is most frequently used throughout the whole Old Testament; sometimes, indeed, improperly of creatures, angels, and men, and of false deities, (Ps. 8:5, 82:1, 6; Jer. 10:11) but properly only of God.

Some derive this word from a root, which signifies to curse and swear; but as to the reasons why this name is given to the divine Being on that account, it is not agreed; some of late, have given this as a reason, because the three divine Persons, as they in a shocking manner express it, bound themselves with an oath, under a curse, to redeem mankind; which, to say no worse of, is indecent and unworthy of the dignity and majesty of God, "who is blessed for evermore"; for to bind himself with an oath, and that under a conditional curse; which is no other than to imprecate a curse upon himself, if his oath and covenant are not fulfilled; is so harsh, if not something worse, as is not to be endured: and though Christ agreed to redeem men, and to be made a curse for them, that they might receive the blessing; yet he was not accursed through any failure of his oath and covenant; but on another account, being the Surety of his people; nor is he ever called Eloah on that account, and still less the other two persons: besides there are other and better reasons to

be given for this name of the divine Being, supposing it to be taken from the word signifying as above; as, because he adjures and causes others to swear, and binds them with an oath to himself; in which sense the word is used of men, (1 Sam. 14:24; 1 King 8:31) and is the business of judges; by which oath men are bound to God, and not he to them; and so, according to the Jewish writers, the word is expressive of God as a judge; in which they are followed by some learned men: or, because he pronounces a man accursed who breaks his law, and neglects and despises the sacrifice and righteousness of Christ; so Cocceius: or, because he is the object men must swear by, whenever they swear at all (see Deut. 6:13; Isa. 65:16). Though this word Elohim cannot be derived from the word so signifying, because it has the immoveable and immutable n , as appears from the point "mappick", in its singular Eloah, and from the construction of it, which that word has not; and besides, that is never used of God when he is said to swear, but always another.

The word Elohim may be better derived from a word in the Arabic language, which signifies to "worship", as is thought by many learned men and so is a fit name for God, who is the sole object of religious worship and adoration; not idols of gold, silver, &c. nor living men, nor persons deified after death, nor angels; but the Lord God only, (Matt. 4:10. It is a word of the plural number; and though it has a singular, which is sometimes used, yet it is most frequently in this form; and being joined with a singular verb, as in (Gen. 1:1 it is thought to denote a plurality of persons in the unity of the divine essence; and certain it is, that three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, appeared, and were concerned in the creation of all things (Gen. 1:1-3; Ps 33:6).

2. Another name of God is "El"; and which may be observed in the word Beth-el, which signifies, "The house of God" (Gen. 12:7, 8). Both the singular and plural, El Elim, the God of gods, are used in Daniel 11:36 and the word is left untranslated in Matthew 27:46 "Eli, Eli; my God, my God". It is commonly rendered, by Junius and Tremellius, the strong or mighty God; an epithet that well agrees with the divine Being, (Job 9:4, 19; Ps. 89:8, 13) and is one of the names of the Messiah (Isa. 9:6). Hillerus takes this to be a part of the word Eloah, the singular of Elohim; which, according to him, signifies the first in essence; being the first and the last, the beginning and the end, (Isa. 44:6; Rev. 1:8) it is expressive of the power of God.

3. The next name of God we meet with is "Elion", the most high, (Gen. 14:18-20, 22). So Christ is called "The son of the Highest", and the Spirit, "the power of the Highest", (Luke 1:32, 35) and which name God has either from his habitation, the highest heavens; which is his palace, where he keeps his court, and which is his throne; in which high and holy place he, the high and lofty One, dwells, (Isa. 57:15, 56:1) or from his superiority, power, and dominion over all creatures, over the highest personages on earth, and the highest angels in heaven, (Ps. 83:18, 97:9; see also Eccl. 5:8) or from the sublimity of his nature and essence, which is out of the reach of finite minds, and is incomprehensible, (Job 11:7, 8). This name was known among the Phoenicians, and is given to one of their deities, called Elioun, the most high; it is expressive of the supremacy of God.

4. Another name of God is "Shaddai": under this name God appeared to Abraham, (Gen. 17:1) and to which reference is had, (Exo. 6:3) we translate it Almighty in both places, and in all others, particularly in the book of Job, where it is often mentioned; and it well agrees with him whose power is infinite and uncontrollable, and appears in the works of his hands, creation and providence. Some choose to render it "sufficient", or "all-sufficient" God; having a sufficiency in and of himself, and for himself, to make himself completely and infinitely happy; nor does he need, nor can he receive any thing from his creatures to add to his happiness; and he has a sufficiency for them; he can, and does, supply all the wants of his people, temporal and spiritual; "his grace is sufficient for them." Others render it "Nourisher"; deriving it from a word which signifies "a breast"; that being what creatures nourish their young with; and is made mention of when this name of God is spoken of (Gen. 49:25). God not only fills men's hearts with food and gladness, but "he opens his hand, and satisfies the desire of all creatures, and gives them their meat in due season" (Acts 14:17; Ps. 145:15, 16). Hillerus derives it from a word which signifies to pour out, or shed; and it well agrees with God, who pours forth, or

sheds his blessings, in great plenty, on his creatures; and which flow from him as from a fountain; to which he is often compared: though others give a very different etymology of it; deriving it from a word which signifies to "destroy"; to which there seems to be a beautiful allusion in (Isa. 13:6. "Destruction from Shaddai, the destroyer", who destroyed the old world, Sodom and Gomorrah, the firstborn of the Egyptians, and Pharaoh and his host: though God is so called, previous to most of these instances; indeed he is "the lawgiver, that is able to save and to destroy"; even to destroy body and soul in hell, with an everlasting destruction. And some render the word the "Darter", or "Thunderer"; whose darts are his thunderbolts (Job 6:4; Ps. 18:13, 14). The heathens called their chief god, Jupiter, "Tonans, The Thunderer": and, perhaps, from another etymology of this word before given, from dv "a breast". Some of their deities are represented as full of breasts; so Ceres, Isis, and Diana. This name seems to be expressive of the all-sufficiency of God, and of the supply of his creatures from it.

5. Another of the names of God is, the "Lord", or "God of hosts"; it is first mentioned in 1 Samuel 1:3, 11 but frequently afterwards; and is left untranslated in James 5:4 where the Lord is called, "the Lord of Sabaoth", not "Sabbath", as it is sometimes wrongly understood; and as if it was the same with "Lord of Sabbath", (Matt. 12:8) for though the words are somewhat alike in sound, they are very different in sense; for "Sabbath" signifies "rest", and "Sabaoth" means "hosts" or "armies": the Lord is the God of armies on earth, a man of war, expert in it; that teacheth men's hands to war, and their fingers to fight, and is the generalissimo of them, as he was particularly of the armies of Israel, as they are called, (Exo. 7:4) which he brought out of Egypt, and went at the head of them, and fought their battles for them; (see Exo. 14:14, 15:3) and who gives success and victory on what side soever he takes: and he is the Lord of the hosts of the starry heavens; the sun, moon, and stars, called the host of heaven, (Gen. 2:1; 2 King 21:3, 23:5) and by this military term, because under the Lord they sometimes fight as the stars did against Sisera, (Jud. 5:20) and also of the airy heavens; and the locusts that fly there are his army, (Joel 2:7, 11) and the meteors, thunder and lightning, snow and hail, which are laid up by him against the day of battle and war, are the artillery he sometimes brings forth against the enemies of his people; as he did against the Egyptians and Canaanites, (Job 38:22, 23; Exo. 9:24, 25; Joshua 10:11) the angels also are the militia of heaven, and are called "the heavenly host", (Luke 2:13; see 1 King 22:19) the place where the angels of God met Jacob, was called from thence Mahanaim, (Gen. 32:1, 2) two hosts or armies, one going before him, and the other behind him; or the one on one side him and the other on the other, to guard him; hence they are said to "encamp" about them that fear the Lord (Ps. 34:7). These are the creatures of God by whom he is adored and served; they are at his command, and sometimes employed in a military way, to destroy his and his peoples enemies (see 2 King 19:35). This name is expressive of God's dominion over all his creatures, and the several armies of them.

6. Another name of God is "Adonai", or "Adon", (Gen. 15:2) and is commonly rendered Lord. Hence the Spanish word "don" for "lord". God is so called, because he is the Lord of the whole earth (Zech. 4:14). Some derive it from a word which signifies the basis, prop, or support of any thing. So a king in the Greek language is called basileuv, because he is the basis and support of his people: and so God is the support of all his creatures; "he upholds all things by the word of his power"; he bears up the pillars of the earth; all men move and have their being in him; and "he upholds his saints with the right hand of his righteousness"; and even his Son as man and mediator, (Isa. 41:10, 42:1). Some think it has the signification of a judge; "God is the judge of all the earth"; and is a righteous one, protects and defends good men, and takes vengeance on the wicked; and will judge the world in righteousness at the last day. Though, perhaps, Hillerus is most correct in rendering it "the Cause", from which, and for which, all things are; as all things are made by the Lord, and for his will, pleasure, and glory (see Rom. 11:36; Heb. 2:10; Rev. 4:11). Adon is used in the plural number of God, (Mai. 1:6) and so Adonai is used of the Son, as well as of the Father, (Ps. 110:1) and of the Holy Spirit, Isaiah 6:8 compared with Acts 28:25. Hence Adonis, with the heathens, the same with the sun, their chief deity, according to Macrobius, by whom Bacchus is called Ebon, or rather Edon; who, he says, is also the same with the sun.

7. The famous name of God is "Jehovah"; this is a name he takes to himself and claims it, (Exo. 6:3; Isa. 42:8) and is peculiar to him; his name alone is Jehovah, and incommunicable to another, (Ps. 83:18) because this name is predicated of God, as a necessary and self-existent being, as a learned Jew observes, which no other is; for though it is sometimes spoken of another, yet not singly and properly, but with relation to him. So the church is called "Jehovah-shammah", because of his presence with her, (Ezek. 48:35). The Jews, from a superstitious abuse of it, assert it to be ineffable, and not to be pronounced, and even not to be read and written, and therefore they substitute other names instead of it, as Adonai, and Elohim. This might arise, originally, from their very great awe and reverence of this name, according to Deuteronomy 28:58 but every name of God is reverend, and not to be taken in vain, nor used in common, nor with any degree of levity, (Ps. 111:9). It is written with four letters only; hence the Jews call it "tetragrammaton", and is very probably the tetraktuv of the Pythagoreans, by which they swore; and it is remarkable, that the word for God is so written in almost all languages; denoting, it may be, that he is the God of the whole world; and ought to be served and worshipped, and his name to be great and had in reverence in the four quarters of it; it takes in all tenses, past, present, and to come: the words of the evangelist John are a proper periphrasis of it; "which is, and which was, and which is to come", (Rev. 1:4) or, "shall be", as in Revelation 16:5 it comes from the root hyh or hwh which signify, "to be", and is expressive of the essence of God; of his necessary and self-existence, for God naturally and necessarily exists; which cannot be said of any other: creatures owe their being to the arbitrary will of God; and so might be, and might not be, as he pleased; but God exists in and of himself, he is a self-existent and independent Being, as he must needs be, since he is before all creatures, and therefore cannot have his being from them; and he is the cause of theirs, and therefore must be independent of them; and yet, when we say he is self-existent, it must not be understood as if he made himself; for though he exists, he is not made.

He is the Being of beings; all creatures have their beings from him and in him, "the heavens, earth, and sea, and all that is in them"; he is the former and maker of all things; he is eminently "the Being", and all in comparison of him are mere non- entities; "all nations", and the inhabitants of them, "are as nothing before him; yea, less than nothing, and vanity" (Isa. 40:17).

8. "Jah" is another name of God, which is mentioned in Psalm 68:4, 150:6, Isaiah 26:4, though it may be only an abbreviation or contraction of the word Jehovah, and may signify the same; according to Cocceius, it comes from hay (Jer. 10:7) and signifies "decency", or what is meet and becoming.

9. "Ejeh" is a name God gave as a name of his to Moses, when he sent him to the children of Israel; and is translated "I AM that I AM", (Exo. 3:13, 14) and may be rendered, "I shall be what I shall be", and what I have been; so the Jews interpret it; "I am he that was, I am he that is now, and I am he that is to come, or shall be." It seems to be of the same signification with Jehovah, and to be derived from the same word, and is expressive of the same things; of the being and existence of God, of his eternity and immutability, and of his faithfulness in performing his promises: our Lord has a manifest respect unto it, when he says, "Before Abraham was I AM", (John 8:58). Hillerus renders it "I remain", that is, always the same.

10. The names of God in the New Testament are these two kuriov and yeov, the one

is usually rendered Lord and the other God. The first is derived either from kurw, "to be", and signifies the same as Jehovah, to which it commonly answers, and denotes the essence or being of God; or from kurov, "power and authority"; and agrees with God, who has a sovereign power and authority over all creatures, having a property in them, by virtue of his creation of them; it is generally used of Christ, "who is Lord of all", (Acts 10:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6). The etymology of yeov, "God", is very different; as either from a word which signifies "to run", or from one that signifies "to heat", or from one that signifies "to see"; which seem to be calculated by the heathens for the sun, the object of their worship, applicable to it, for its constant course, being the fountain of light and heat, and seeing all things, as they affirm: though each of them may be applied to the true God, who runs to the assistance of his people in distress, (2 Chron. 16:9; Ps. 46:1) is light itself, "the Lather of lights", and "a

consuming fire" (1 John 1:5; James 1:17; Heb. 12:29) and sees all men, their ways and works, and even their hearts, and the thoughts of them (Job 34:21, 22; 1 Sam. 16:7). Some derive it from a word which signifies to dispose; and which agrees with God, who disposes of, and orders all things "in the armies of the heavens, and among the inhabitants of the earth, according to the council of his will", and to answer the purposes of his own glory, and the good of his creatures.

Though, perhaps, it may be best of all to derive it from a word which signifies "fear", and so describes God as the object of fear and reverence; who is not only to be stood in awe of by all the inhabitants of the earth, (Ps. 33:8) but more especially is to be feared with a godly fear by his saints, (Ps. 87:7; Heb. 12:28) and fear sometimes takes in the whole worship of God, both internal and external; and so the true God, in distinction from others, is called, "the fear", that is, the God of Isaac, (Gen. 31:53), and *6m "fear", is sometimes used in the Targum for the true God, as it sometimes is of idols. Prom all these names of God we learn that God is the eternal, immutable, and almighty Being, the Being of beings, self-existent, and self-sufficient, and the object of religious worship and adoration.

Chapter 4

OF THE NATURE OF GOD

There is a nature that belongs to every creature, which is difficult to understand; and so to God, the Creator, which is most difficult of all: that "Nature" may be predicated of God, is what the apostle suggests when he says, the Galatians, before conversion, served them, who, "by nature, were no gods", (Gal. 4:8) which implies, that though the idols they had worshipped were not, yet there was one that was, by

Nature, GOD; otherwise there would be an impropriety in denying it of them. Mention is also made of the "divine Nature", (2 Peter 1:4) which, indeed, is not the nature that is in God, but what is infused and implanted in men in regeneration; so called, not only because it is from God, as its author, but because it is the image of him, and bears a likeness and resemblance to him; but then there must be a nature in him to which this is similar, being "created, after him, in righteousness and true holiness"; or there would be no propriety in the denomination of it from him. This is what is called Divinity, Deity, or Godhead; which must not be thought to be "like to gold, silver, or stone, graven by art, or man's device"; or to be in the similitude of any creature, in a picture, painting, or sculpture; and which is to be seen and understood by the visible works of creation, and is what, "in all its perfection and fullness, dwells bodily in Christ", (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col 2:9). It is the same with the form of God, in which Christ is said to be, (Phil. 2:6) which designs not any external form, for God has no visible shape, but his internal Glory, excellency, nature, and perfections, in which "Christ is equal with him, and his fellow"; and he is not only the express image of him, but one with him; not merely of a like, but of the same nature; so that he that sees the one, see the other. Essence, which is the same thing with nature, is ascribed to God; he is said to be "excellent hyvwt in essence", (Isa. 28:29) for so the words may be rendered, that is, he has the most excellent essence or being; this is contained in his names, "Jehovah", and "I am that

I am", which are expressive of his essence or being, as has been observed; and we are required to believe that he is, that he has a being or essence, and does exist, (Heb. 11:6) and essence is that by which a person or thing is what it is, that is its nature; and with respect to God, it is the same with his "face", which cannot be seen, (Exo. 33:20, 23) that is, cannot be perceived, understood, and fully comprehended, especially in the present state; and, indeed, though in the future state saints will behold the face of God, and "see him face to face, and as he is", so far as they are capable of, yet it is impossible for a finite mind, in its most exalted state, to comprehend the infinite Nature and Being of God.

This nature is common to the three Persons in God, but not communicated from one to another; they each of them partake of it, and possess it as one undivided nature; they all enjoy it; it is not a part of it that is enjoyed by one, and a part of it by another, but the whole by each; as "all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ", so in the holy Spirit; and of the Father, there will be no doubt; these equally subsist in the unity of the divine essence, and that without any derivation or communication of it from one to another. I know it is represented by some, who, otherwise, are

sound in the doctrine of the Trinity, that the divine nature is communicated from the Father to the Son and Spirit, and that he is "fons Deitatis", "the fountain of Deity"; which, I think, are unsafe phrases; since they seem to imply a priority in the Father to the other two persons; for he that communicates must, at least in order of nature, and according to our conception of things, be prior to whom the communication is made; and that he has a superabundant plenitude of Deity in him, previous to this communication. It is better to say, that they are self-existent, and exist together in the same undivided essence; and jointly, equally, and as early one as the other, possess the same nature.

The nature of God is, indeed, incomprehensible by us; somewhat of it may be apprehended, but it cannot be fully comprehended; "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (Job 11:7). No: but then this does not forbid us searching and inquiring after him: though we cannot have adequate ideas of God, yet we should endeavour to get the best we can, and frame the best conceptions of him we are able; that so we may serve and worship him, honour and glorify him, in the best manner. "The world", the heathen world, even the wisest in it, "by wisdom knew not God", (1 Cor. 1:21) they knew, or might know, there was a God, but they did not know what he was, and so glorified him not as God. An heathen philosopher being asked this question, what God was? required a day to think of it; when that was up, he asked a second, and still more time; and a reason of his dilatoriness being demanded of him, he replied, that the longer he considered of the question, the more obscure it was to him. Yet, somewhat of God, of his nature and perfections, may be known by the light of nature, (Rom. 1:19, 20) and more by divine revelation; for though it may with propriety be said, "what is his name", or nature, "if thou canst, tell?" (Prov. 30:4) yet he??? whom the heathens "ignorantly worshipped", the apostle Paul "declared" unto them, (Acts 17:23) and though the Samaritans worshipped they knew not what, yet Christ declared to the woman of Samaria, what God, the object of spiritual worship, is; saying "God is a spirit"; that is, he is of a spiritual nature, (John 4:22, 24) and this we may be sure is a true definition, description, and declaration of God, and of his nature; since this was given by the Son of God, who lay in his bosom, and perfectly knew his nature, as well as his will; see (John 1:18; Matt 11:27) and by which we are taught,

1. That God is not a body, and that we are, in our conceptions of him, to remove every thing from him that is corporeal; for spirit, and body or flesh, are opposed to one another, (Isa. 31:3; Luke 24:39) and yet there have been some, both ancients and moderns, atheistically inclined, who have asserted, that matter is God, and God is universal matter; and that the whole universe is God, and that extension is one of his attributes: and a sort of people called Anthropomorphites, who bore the Christian name, ascribed an human body, and the parts of it, to God, in a proper sense, mistaking some passages of scripture; and the common people, among the papists, have no other notion of God, than of a grave old man: in this respect both Jews and Heathens have better notions; of the Jews, R. Joseph Albo, Maimonides, and others, deny that God is a body, or consists of bodily parts: and of heathens, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Sallustius, and others, affirm God to be incorporeal; and the Stoics say, he has not an human forms. [But if God was matter, which is inert, inactive, and motionless, he could not be the maker and mover of all things, as he is; "for in him we live, and move, and have our being", (Acts 17:28). Matter is without consciousness, is not capable of thinking, and without understanding, wisdom, and knowledge; and as it is not capable of acting, so much less of doing, such works as require contrivance, skill, wisdom, and knowledge, as the works of creation and providence; and therefore if God was matter, he could not be the Creator and

Governor of the world; nor if a body, could he be omnipresent; a body is not every where, cannot be in two places at the same time; whereas God fills heaven and earth: and was he of so huge a body as to take up all space, there would be no room for other bodies, as there certainly is; nor would he be invisible; a body is to be seen and felt; but God is invisible and impalpable; "no man hath seen God at any time"; and if a body, he would not be the most perfect of beings, as he is, since angels, and the souls of men, being spirits, are more excellent than bodies.

It is no objection to this, that the parts of an human body are sometimes attributed to God; since these are

to be understood of him not in a proper, but in an improper and figurative sense, and denote some act and action, or attribute of his; thus his face denotes his sight and presence, in which all things are, (Gen. 19:13) sometimes his favour and good will, and the manifestation of his love and grace, (Ps. 27:8, 80:3) and sometimes his wrath and indignation against wicked men, (Ps. 34:16; Rev. 6:17). His "eyes" signify his omniscience and all-seeing providence; concerned both with good men, to protect and preserve them, and bestow good things on them; and with bad men, to destroy them, (Prov. 15:3; 2 Chron. 16:9; Amos 9:8). His "ears", his readiness to attend unto, and answer the requests of his people, and deliver them out of their troubles, (Ps. 34:15; Isa. 59:1). His nose and nostrils, his acceptance of the persons and sacrifices of men, (Gen. 8:21) or his disgust at them, anger with them, and non-acceptance of them, (Deut. 29:20; Isa. 65:5; Ps. 18:8). His mouth is expressive of his commands, promises, threatenings, and prophecies delivered out by him, (Lam. 3:29; Isa. 1:20; Jer. 23:16). His "arms" and "hands" signify his power, and the exertion of it, as in making the heavens and the earth, and in other actions of his, (Ps. 102:27; Job 26:13; Ps. 89:13, 118:16; Deut. 33:27).

Nor is it any proof of corporeity in God, that a divine person has sometimes appeared in an human form; so one of the men that came to Abraham, in the plains of Mamre, was no other than the Lord omniscient and omnipotent, as the after discourse with him shows, (Gen. 18:3). And the man that wrestled with Jacob till break of day, was a divine person, of which Jacob was sensible; and therefore called the place where he wrestled with him, "Peniel", the face of God, (Gen. 32:24, 30). So he that appeared to Manoah, and his wife, (Judg. 13:6, 10, 18) with other instances that might be mentioned. But then these were appearances of the Son of God in an human form, and were presages of his future incarnation; for as for the Father, no man ever saw his shape, (John 5:37) and, it may be, the reason why the parts of an human body are so often ascribed to God, may be on account of Christ's incarnation, to prepare the minds of men for it, to inure them to ideas of it, to raise their expectation of it, and strengthen their faith in it; and the rather since these attributions were more frequent before the coming of Christ in the flesh, and very rarely used afterwards.

Nor will the formation of man in the image, and after the likeness of God, afford a sufficient argument to prove that there is something corporeal in God, seeing man has a soul or spirit, in which this image and likeness chiefly and principally lay; and which was originally created in righteousness and holiness, in wisdom and knowledge: and though he has a body also; yet, inasmuch as a body was prepared in the council and covenant of grace, from eternity, for the Son of God to assume in time; and in the book of God's eternal purposes, "all the members of it were written; which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them", (Heb. 10:5; Ps. 139:16). God might, according to the idea of it in his eternal mind, form the body of the first man.

2. The description of God, as a Spirit, teaches us to ascribe to God all the excellencies to be found in spirits in a more eminent manner, and to consider them as transcendent and infinite in him. By spirits, I understand not subtilized bodies, extracted out of various things; nor the wind and air, so called because invisible, and very piercing and penetrating, though bodies, and very ponderous ones; nor the spirits of animals, which are material, die, and go downwards to the earth: but rational spirits, angels, and the souls of men; the former are called spirits, (Zech. 6:5; Heb. 1:1, 5) and so are the latter, (Job 32:8; Heb 12:23) they are indeed created spirits, (Ps. 104:4; Zech. 12:1) but God an uncreated one, and is the Creator of these, and therefore said to be, "the Father of spirits", (Heb. 12:9). These are creatures of time, and finite beings; made since the world was, and are not every where: but God is an eternal, infinite, and immense Spirit, from everlasting to everlasting; and whom "the heaven of heavens cannot contain"; yet there are some excellencies in spirits, which may lead more easily to conceive somewhat of God, and of his divine nature.

Spirits are immaterial, have no corporal parts, as flesh, blood, and bones, (Luke 24:39) and though eyes, hands, &c. are ascribed to God, yet not of flesh, (Job 10:4) but such as express what is suitable to spiritual beings in the most exalted sense.

Spirits are incorruptible; for having no matter about them, they are not liable to corruption; they are, indeed, capable of moral corruption, as appears

from the angels that sinned, and, from the depravity of the souls of men by the fall; but not of natural corruption: but God is not subject to corruption in any sense, and is therefore called the "incorruptible God", (Rom. 1:23) Spirits are immortal; angels die not, (Luke 20:36) the souls of men cannot be killed, (Matt. 10:28) not consisting of parts, that are capable of being divided and separated, they cannot be brought to destruction. It is one of the characters of God, that he is "immortal", yea, "only hath immortality"; and so more transcendently, and in a more eminent manner immortal than angels, and the souls of men; he has it of himself, and underivatively, and is the giver of it to others, (1 Tim. 1:17, 6:16). Spirits are invisible; it is a vulgar mistake that they are to be seen; who ever saw the soul of a man? or an angel, in its pure form? whenever they have made themselves visible, it has been by assuming another form, an human one. "God is invisible, and dwells in light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see", (1 Tim. 1:17, 6:16) and therefore as no likeness and similitude of a spirit can be formed and taken, so none of God: who can tell of what colour, form and figure, shape and size, the soul of a man is? Nor can any describe the form and figure of an angel: as for the pictures, paintings, and sculptures of them, they are the fruit of mere fancy and imagination, and at most but emblematical: because angels have appeared in an human form, therefore they are painted as young men; and because of their quick dispatch, and swiftness, in doing the errands and messages they have been sent upon, wings are given, them; but never was such a creature in real being, or ever seen in the whole world, in any age, as a young man with wings at his shoulders. So no likeness can be formed of God; no similitude was ever seen of him, and to whom can he be likened and compared? (Deut. 4:12; Isa 40:18, 46:5). Some of the Heathens have acknowledged the invisibility of God, as a Spirit; and Aristotle argues the invisibility of God, from the invisibility of the soul of man.

But besides these properties, there are others still more excellent in spirits, by which they approach nearer to God, and bear a greater resemblance to him, and serve to give us clearer ideas of his nature; they are living, active, endowed with understanding, will, and affections; they are lively, have a principle of life; angels are commonly thought to be the living creatures in Ezekiel's vision; however, they are such, and so the souls of men: the body of Adam, when first made, was a lifeless lump of clay; but when God breathed into him the breath of life, "he became a living soul", (Gen. 2:7). God is the living God, has life in and of himself, and gives life to all creatures that have it. Spirits are active, and can operate upon others, as the souls of men on their bodies; God is all act, "actus simplicissimus", as he is sometimes styled, the most simple act; there is nothing passive in him, as matter, to be wrought upon; he works, and always works; and "all creatures live and move, and have their being in him", (John 5:17; Acts 17:28). Spirits, angels, and the souls of men, are intelligent beings, have a faculty of understanding things natural and spiritual; the understanding of God is infinite, there is no searching of it; lie understands himself, and all created beings, and their natures, (Ps. 147:6; Isa. 40:28). Spirits have the power of willing, they are voluntary agents; and God wills whatever he does, and does whatever he wills; his will is boundless, uncontrollable, and sovereign, (Ps. 115:3; Dan. 4:35). Spirits have the affections of love, mercy, pity, &c. God not only loves his creatures, but "is love itself", (1 John 4:16). "His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, on them that fear him"; and he pities them as a father pities his children, (Ps. 103:13, 17).

3. God being a Spirit, we learn that he is a simple and uncompounded Being, and does not consist of parts, as a body does; his spirituality involves his simplicity: some indeed consider this as an attribute of God; and his spirituality also: and, indeed, every attribute of God, is God himself, is his nature, and are only so many ways of considering it, or are so many displays of it. However, it is certain God is not composed of parts, in any sense; not in a physical sense, of essential parts, as matter and form, of which bodies consist: nor of integral parts, as soul and body, of which men consist: nor in a "metaphysical" sense, as of essence and existence, of act and power: nor in a "logical" sense, as of kind and difference, substance and accident; all which would argue imperfection, weakness, and mutability. If God was composed of parts he would

not be "eternal", and absolutely the first Being, since the composing parts would, at least, co-exist with him; besides, the composing parts, in our conception of them, would be prior to the compositum; as the body and soul of man, of which he is composed, are prior to his being a man: and, beside, there must be a composer, who puts the parts togetherand therefore must be before what is composed of them: all which is inconsistent with the eternity of God: nor would he be "infinite" and "immense"; for either these parts are finite, or infinite; if finite, they can never compose an infinite Being; and if infinite, there must be more infinities than one, which implies a contradiction: nor would he be "independent"; for what is composed of parts, depends upon those parts, and the union of them, by which it is preserved: nor would he be "immutable", unalterable, and immortal; since what consists of parts, and depends upon the union of them, is liable to alteration, and to be resolved into those parts again, and so be dissolved and come to destruction. In short, he would not be the most perfect of Beings; for as the more spiritual a being is, the more perfect it is; and so it is, the more simple and uncompounded it is: as even all things in nature are more noble, and more pure, the more free they are from composition and mixture.

Nor is the simplicity of God to be disproved by the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead; for though there are three distinct persons, there is but one nature and essence common to them all, and which is not parted and divided among them, but is jointly and equally possessed by them; nor do these persons really differ from the divine nature and essence, nor from one another, but by their distinct modes of subsisting; so that they only distinguish and modify, but do neither divide nor compose the divine nature: nor is it to be disproved by the decrees of God; the decrees of God are within himself, and, as it is commonly said, whatever is in God, is God, and so are no other than God himself, as to the act of decreeing, though not with respect to the things decreed; and though they are many and various, as to the objects of them, yet not in God, who, by one eternal act, in his infinite mind, has decreed every thing that has been, is, or shall be; and is what Plato means by en kai polla, "one" and "many" in God; one, as to his essence; many, as to the ideas and decrees in it, which many are one: nor is it to be disproved by the attributes of God; for they are no other than God himself, and neither differ from one another, but with respect to their objects, and effect, and in our manner of conception of them; nor from the nature and essence of God; they are himself, and his nature; he is not only eternal, wise, good, loving, &c. but he is eternity itself, wisdom itself, goodness itself, love itself, &c. and these are not parts of his nature, but displays of the same undivided nature, and are different considerations of it, in which we view it; our minds being so weak as not to be able to conceive of God at once and together, and in the gross, but one thing after another, and the same in different lights, that we may better understand it: these several things, called attributes, which are one in God, are predicated of him, and ascribed to him distinctly, for helps to our finite understandings, and for the relief of our minds; and that we, with more facility and ease, might conceive of the nature of God, and take in more of him, as we can by parcels and piecemeals, than in the whole; and so, as a learned Jew observes, all those attributes are only intellectual notions; by which are conceived the perfections that are in the essence of God, but in reality are nothing but his essence; and which attributes will be next considered.

Chapter 5
OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD IN GENERAL, AND OF HIS IMMUTABILITY IN PARTICULAR.

The attributes of God are variously distinguished by divines; some distinguish them into negative and positive, or affirmative: the negative are such as remove from him whatever is imperfect in creatures; such are infinity, immutability, immortality, &c. which deny him to be finite, mutable, and mortal; and, indeed, it is easier to say what God is not, than what he is: the positive, or affirmative, are such as assert some perfection in God, which is in and of himself; and which in the creatures, in any measure, is from him, as wisdom, goodness, justice, holiness, &c. but the distinction is discarded by others; because in all negative attributes some positive excellency is found. Some distribute them into a "twofold order", first

and second: attributes, or essential properties of the "first order", declare the essence of God as in himself, such as his simplicity and perfection, infinity and immutability; and attributes, or essential properties of the "second order", which though primarily and properly, and naturally, and infinitely, and in a more excellent manner are in God, than in creatures; yet secondarily, and in an analogical sense, are in them, there being some similitude of them in them, of which there is none of the former order in them; these are said to be life and immortality, blessedness and glory.

Again, some are said to be "absolute", and others "relative": absolute ones are such as eternally agree with the essence of God, without respect to his creatures, and are expressed by his names, Jehovah, Jah, &c. relative ones are such as agree with him in time, with some certain respect to his creatures, and are expressed by his being their Creator, Governor, Preserver, Redeemer, &c. some are called "proper", as those before mentioned; and others "figurative", signified by the parts of the human body, and the affections of the mind, as observed in the preceding chapter: but the more commonly received distinction of the attributes of God, is, into the "communicable" and "incommunicable" ones; the incommunicable attributes of God, are such as there is no appearance or shadow of them in creatures; as independence, immutability, immensity, and eternity: communicable ones, are such as are common to God, with men; or, however, of which there is some resemblance in men, as goodness, holiness, justice, and wisdom; yet of these it may be said, that they are incommunicable, as they are in God, in whom they are infinite, and cannot, as such, be communicated to finite creatures: none but God is essentially, originally, underivatively, perfectly, and infinitely good, holy, just, and wise. But as God is defined a "Spirit" in scripture, as has been observed, I shall endeavour to sort the perfections and attributes of God in agreement with that: and with respect to his nature, as an uncreated Spirit, may be referred, besides his spirituality, and simplicity, already considered, his immutability, and infinity, which includes his immensity, or omnipresence, and eternity: and with respect to it as active, and operative, the life of God, and his omnipotence: and with respect to the faculties, as a rational spirit, particularly the understanding, to which may belong, his omniscience, and manifold wisdom; and the will, under which may be considered the acts of that, and the sovereignty of it; and the affections, to which may be reduced, the love, grace, mercy, hatred, anger, patience, and long suffering of God: and lastly, under the notions of qualities and virtues, may be considered, his goodness, holiness, justice, truth, and faithfulness; and, as the complement of the whole, his perfection or all-sufficiency, glory, and blessedness: and in this order I shall consider them. And begin with,

The Immutability of God; which arises from, and is closely connected with his spirituality and simplicity, or is what agrees with him, and is necessary to him as a spiritual, simple and uncompounded Being.

Immutability is an attribute which God claims, and challenges as peculiar to himself; "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mai. 3:6). Mutability belongs to creatures, immutability to God only; creatures change, but he does not: the heavens and the earth, which he has made, are not always the same; but "he is the same for ever": the visible heavens are often changing; they are sometimes serene and clear, at other times covered with clouds and darkness, and filled with meteors, snow, rain, hail, &c. the face of the earth appears different at the various seasons of the year, and is particularly renewed every spring: it has undergone one great change by a flood, and will undergo another by fire; when that, and "the works that are therein, shall be burnt up; and the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved; and the elements shall melt with fervent heat"; and "new heavens", and "a new earth", shall succeed (2 Peter 3:10,12,13), to which changeableness in them, the unchangeableness of God is opposed: "All of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end" (Ps. 102:25-27). The sun in the firmament, that great luminary, and fountain of light and heat, in allusion to which, God is called "the Father of lights", has its parallaxes, or various appearances, at morning, noon, and evening; it has its risings and settings; and never rises and sets at the same point in the heavens one day in the year, but always varies a little; it is sometimes

under clouds, and in an eclipse; but "with" God "is no variableness", parallagh, or a parallax; the sun, at certain seasons of the year, passes from one tropic, and enters into another, as well as casts shades on the earth; but with God there is "no shadow of turning", trophv, of a trope, or tropic; there is no mutation nor turning in him, nor shadow of any (James 1:17; Job 23:13), the inhabitants of heaven and earth are changeable, even the most excellent of them, angels and men: angels in their original nature and state, were subject to change, as the apostasy of many of them have shown; who have changed both state and place; they "kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation", being obliged to the latter, because of the former; for sinning against God, they were hurled out of heaven, and "cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (Jude 1:6; 2 Peter 2:4), the angels which stood when the rest fell, are now indeed become impeccable, and are firmly settled in their state of integrity; but then this is owing not to their own nature, but to the electing grace of God, in Christ, and to the confirming grace of Christ, their head, who is the "head of all principality and power" (1 Tim. 5:21; Col 2:10). Man, at his best estate, his estate of innocence, and integrity, was "altogether vanity": for though not sinful, yet being mutable, and left to the mutability of his will, which was his vanity, when tempted fell into sin; and though made upright, lost the rectitude of his nature; though made after the image of God, soon came short of that glory; and though he had dominion over the creatures, being in honour, he abode not long, but became like those he had the power over; and though placed in the most delightful and fruitful spot in all the globe, yet, rebelling against his Maker and Benefactor, was driven out from thence by him; and is now a creature subject to innumerable changes in life; diseases of various sorts seize his body, and change his beauty and his strength, and death at last turns him to corruption and dust; he is like the changeable grass of the field; flourishes a while, is then cut down, and withers away; but God and his "word endure for ever" the same (1 Peter 1:24, 25), good men are very mutable, both in their inward and outward estate: in spiritual affairs; in the frames of their minds, in the affections of their souls, in the exercise of grace, in their devotion and obedience to God, and worship of him: in temporal affairs; what an instance of mutability was Job, in his estate, in his family, and in his health and friends? well might he say, "changes and war are against me" (Job 10:17), and at length came to his great and last change, death; as all men must, even the best of men: indeed, in the future state, good men will be no more subject to change; their spirits will be made perfect, and sin no more, nor sorrow any more; and their bodies, when raised, will remain immortal, incorruptible, spiritual, powerful, and glorious; but this will be owing, not to themselves, but to the unchangeable grace and power of God: God only is in and of himself immutable; and he is unchangeable in his nature, perfections, and purposes, and in his love and affections to his people, and in his covenant, and the blessings and promises of it; and even in his threatenings.

1. In his nature and essence, being "simple", and devoid of all composition, as has been proved: the more simple and free from mixture and composition anything is, the less subject to change, gold and silver, being the purest and freest of all metals from composition, are not so alterable as others: spirits, being uncompounded, and not consisting of parts, are not so changeable as bodies; and God, being an infinite and uncreated Spirit, and free from composition in every sense, is entirely and perfectly immutable: and since he is "eternal", there can be no change of time with him; time doth not belong to him, only to a creature, which is the measure of its duration; and began when a creature began to be, and not before; but God is before all creatures; they being made by him, and so before time; he was the same before the day was as now, and now as he was before; "even the same today, yesterday, and for ever": though he is "the ancient of days", he does not become older and older; he is no older now than he was millions of ages ago, nor will be millions of ages to come; his eternity is an everlasting and unchangeable "now"; "He is the same, and his years shall have no end" (Ps. 102:27; Heb. 13:8), and seeing he is "infinite, immense, and omnipresent"; there can be no change of place with him, for he "fills heaven and earth" with his presence; he is everywhere, and cannot change or move from place to place; when

therefore he is said to "come down" on earth, or to "depart" from men, it is not to be understood of local motion, or change of place; but of some uncommon exertion of his power, and demonstration of his presence, or of the withdrawment of some benefit from them: but this will be considered more largely under the attribute of omnipresence, in its proper place. God is the "most perfect" Being, and therefore can admit of no change in his nature, neither of increase nor decrease, of addition nor diminution; if he changes, it must be either for the better or the worse; if for the better, then he was imperfect before, and so not God: if for the worse, then he becomes imperfect; and the same follows: a like reasoning is used by Plato, and by another ancient philosopher, who asserts that God is good, impassable and unchangeable; for whatsoever is changed, says he, is either for the better or the worse; if for the worse, it becomes bad; and if for the better, it was bad at first. Or if he changes from an infinitely perfect state, to another equally so, then there must be more infinites than one, which is a contradiction. Again, if any change is made in him, it must be either from somewhat within him, or from somewhat without him; if from within, he must consist of parts; there must be "another" and "another" in him; he must consist of act and power; there must be not only something active in him, to work upon him, but a passive power to be, wrought upon; which is contrary to his simplicity, already established; for, as a Jew well argues, what necessarily exists of itself, has no other cause by which it can be changed; nor that which changes, and that which is changed, cannot be together; for so there would be in it two, one which changes, and another which is changed, and so would be compound; which is inconsistent with the simplicity of God: if from somewhat without him, then there must be a superior to him, able to move and change him; but he is the most high God; there is none in heaven nor in earth above him; he is "God over all, blessed for ever".

Nor is the immutability of the divine nature to be disproved from the creation of the world, and all things in it; as when it is suggested, God, from a non-agent, became an agent, and acquired a new relation, that of a Creator, from whence mutability is argued: but it should be observed, that God had from all eternity the same creative power, and would have had, if he had never created any thing; and when he put it forth in time, it was according to his unchangeable will in eternity, and produced no change in him; the change was in the creatures made, not in him the Maker; and though a relation results from hence, and which is real in creatures, is only nominal in the Creator, and makes no change in his nature.

Nor is the unchangeableness of the divine nature to be disproved by the incarnation of Christ; for though he, a divine Person, possessed of the divine nature, was "made flesh", or became man; the divine nature in him was not changed into the human nature, nor the human nature into the divine, nor a third nature made out of them both; was this the case, the divine nature would have been changeable; but so it was not; for as it has been commonly said, "Christ remained what he was, and assumed what he was not"; and what he assumed added nothing to his divine person; he was only "manifest in the flesh"; he neither received any perfection, nor imperfection, from the human nature; though that received dignity and honour by its union to him, and was adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit without measure, and is now advanced at the right hand of God. Nor was any change made in the divine nature by the sufferings of Christ; the divine nature is incable of suffering, and is one reason why Christ assumed the human nature, that he might be capable of suffering and dying in the room and stead of his people; and though the Lord of life and glory was crucified, and God purchased the church with his own blood, and the blood of Christ is called the blood of the Son of God; yet he was crucified in the human nature only, and his blood was shed in that, to which the divine person gave virtue and efficacy, through its union to it; but received no change by all this.

2. God is unchangeable in his perfections or attributes; which, though they are the same with himself, his nature and essence, as has been observed; yet, considering them separately, they are helps to our better understanding of it, and serve particularly to illustrate the unchangeableness of it: thus, for instance, he is the same in his power as ever; though that has been displayed in various instances, in creation,

providence, &c. it is not exhausted, nor in the least diminished; his hand is not shortened, his strength is everlasting, his power eternal, invariably the same: his "knowledge" is the same; his "understanding is infinite", it can be neither increased nor lessened; the knowledge of angels and men increases gradually; but not so the knowledge of God, he knows no more now than he did from all eternity, he knew as much then as he does now; for he knows and sees all things together, and at once, in his vast eternal mind, and not one thing after another, as they appear in time; things past, present, and to come, are all beheld by him in one view; that is, which are so with respect to creatures, for with him there is no such consideration: his "goodness", grace, and mercy, are immutable; though there has been such a profusion of his goodness to his creatures, and so many good and perfect gifts have been bestowed on them, it is still the same in him, without any abatement; he is abundant in it, and it endures continually the same: and so is his grace, which has been exceedingly abundant; he is as gracious and merciful as ever; "his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, to them that fear him"; and his faithfulness he never suffers to fail; even though men believe not, he abides faithful; and the unbelief of men cannot make the faith or faithfulness of God without effect. And as he is "glorious" in "holiness", that perfection never receives any tarnish, can never be sullied, but is always illustriously the same; there is no unrighteousness in God, he cannot change from holiness to unholiness, from righteousness to unrighteousness; he is the just one, that neither can nor will do iniquity; and so he is unchangeably good, and unchangeably happy, and immutable in every perfection.

3. God is unchangeable in his purposes and decrees, there is a purpose for everything, and a time for that purpose; God has determined all that ever was, is, or shall be; all things come to pass according to the counsel of his will, and all his decrees are unchangeable; they are like the laws of the Medes and Persians, and more unalterable than they were; they are the mountains of brass Zechariah saw in a vision, from whence proceed the providences of God, and the executioners of them (Zech. 6:1), called "mountains" because of their immoveableness, and mountains of "brass" to denote their greater firmness and stability: immutability is expressly spoken of the counsel of God (Heb. 6:17), the purposes of God are always carried into execution, they are never frustrated; it is not in the power of men and devils to disannul them; whatever devices and counter workings to them may be framed and formed, they are of no avail; "the counsel of the Lord stands for ever" (Ps. 33:11; Prov. 19:21, 21:30; Isa. 14:24, 27, 46:10), the purposes of God are "within" himself (Eph. 1:9), and what is in himself, is himself, and he can as soon cease to be as to alter his mind, or change his counsels; and they are "eternal" (Eph. 3:11) no new thoughts arise in his mind, no new resolutions are formed in his breast, no new decrees are made by him; his counsels are "of old"; and his purposes are called "counsels", because designs wisely formed by men, are with consultation, and upon mature deliberation: and such are the decrees of God, they are made with the highest wisdom by him, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, and so are unchangeable: and besides, being "all-knowing", he sees and declares the end from the beginning, and nothing unforeseen ever can appear to hinder the execution of his intentions and determinations; which is sometimes the case with men: and he is "able" to perform whatever he resolves upon; there is no lack of wisdom, nor of power in him, as often is in men; and he is "faithful" to himself, his purposes and decrees; his "counsels of old are faithfulness and truth"; or are truly and faithfully performed.

Nor is the immutability of the decrees of God to be disproved by his providences, which are many and various, unsearchable and past finding out, and which may seem to differ from, and clash with one another; for all the changes in providence, whether with respect to the world in general, or with respect to individuals, are according to his unchangeable will. Job was a remarkable instance of changes in providence, and yet he was fully persuaded of the unchangeable will of God in them, and which he strongly expresses; "He is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doth; for he performeth the thing that is appointed for me; and many such things are with him" (Job 23:13, 14). Nor is it to be

disproved by the different declarations of the will of God, what he would have observed and done, in the different dispensations of law and gospel. God, by Moses, ordered the children of Israel, to observe certain laws, rites, and ceremonies, until the time of reformation, and then there was a disannulling of them; the heavens and earth were shaken, that is, the whole Mosaic economy and dispensation, whereby these were removed and laid aside as useless, and other ordinances were fixed, to remain till Christ's second coming; but then the delivery of the one, and the time of their continuance, and the abolition of them, and the settling of the other gospel ordinances to remain to the end of the world, were all according to the unchangeable will of God.

Nor is prayer any objection to the immutability of the divine will, which is not to be altered by it; for when the mind of God is not towards a people to do them good, it cannot be turned to them by the most fervent and importunate prayers of those who have the greatest interest in him (Jer. 15:1), and when he bestows blessings on a praying people, it is not for the sake of their prayers, as if he was inclined and turned by them: but for his own sake, and of his own sovereign will and pleasure.

Should it be said, to what purpose then is prayer? it is answered, this is the way and means God has appointed, for the communication of the blessings of his goodness to his people; for though he has purposed, provided, and promised them, yet he will be sought unto, to give them to them, and it is their duty and privilege to ask them of him; and when they are blessed with a spirit of prayer, it forebodes well, and looks as if God intended to bestow the good things asked; and which should be asked always with submission to the will of God, saying, "not my will, but thine be done".

4. God is unchangeable in his love and affections to his people; "his love to them isfrom everlasting to everlasting", without any variation in his own heart, however different the manifestations of it may be to them; he ever rests in his love, and never alters, nothing can separate from it, he is love itself, and it is as unchangeable as himself, "the same today, yesterday, and for ever": the fall made no difference in it, though the special objects of it fell with Adam, in his transgression, into the depths of sin and misery; this hindered not, but God continued his love, and manifested it in sending his Son to be the propitiation for their sins, and commended it, and gave a full proof and demonstration of it, in the delivery of Christ to death for them, even while they were yet sinners: nor does the sinful state and condition they were brought into, and continue in from their birth to their conversion, make any alteration in his love; but notwithstanding that, for the great love with which he loves them, he "quickens them when dead in trespasses and sins"; he looks upon them in all the impurity of their natural state, and says to them, "live"; and this time, as it is a time of life, it is a time of open love (see Eph 2:4, 5; Ezek. 16:6-8; Titus 3:3-5). Nor do the hidings of God's face from them after conversion, prove any change in his love to them; for though he hides his face from them, and forsakes them for a moment, in a little seeming wrath, to show his resentment at their sins, to bring them to a sense of them, to humble them before him, and to cause them to seek his face and favour; yet with great mercies he gathers them again to himself, in the most tender manner, and with lovingkindness, has mercy on them; and, for the strengthening of their faith in his love, swears he will not be wroth with them; and declares his lovingkindness to be more immoveable than hills and mountains (Isa. 54:7-10). Afflictions are no evidence of a change of affections to them; though he may thoroughly chastise them, and, as they may think, severely, yet he deals with them but as children; and, like Ephraim, they are his dear sons and daughters, and pleasant children, in whom he takes the utmost complacency and delight; chastenings are rather proofs of sonship, than arguments against it. God's rebukes of them are rebukes in love, and not in wrath and hot displeasure; though he visits their transgressions with a rod and stripes, he does not utterly, nor at all, take away his lovingkindness in Christ from them (Jer. 31:18, 20; Heb. 12:6-8; Rev. 3:19; Ps. 89:32, 33). Nor is the unchangeableness of the love of God to his people to be disproved by his being said to be angry with them, and then to turn away his anger from them (Isa. 12:1), for anger is not opposite

to love. Jacob was angry with his beloved Rachel, and a father may be angry with his beloved child, and love him not the less. Wrath and hatred are opposed to love, which are never in the heart of God towards his beloved ones: besides, this is said after the manner of men, and according to our apprehension of things; the Lord doing somewhat similar to men when they are angry, who frown and turn away; and when God frowns in his providence, and deserts his people for a while, they judge he is angry, when it only shows his discipline at their sins, but not at their persons; and then, when he smiles upon them again, and manifests his pardoning grace and mercy, they conclude he has turned himself from the fierceness of his anger (Ps. 85:2, 3).

5. God is unchangeable in his covenant of grace. This was made with Christ from everlasting, and stands fast with him; it is as immoveable as a rock, and can never be broken; the blessings of it are "sure mercies", flow from the sovereign grace and mercy of God, and are sure and firm, being according to his unchangeable will, and are what he never repents of, nor revokes; and being once bestowed, are irreversible, and never taken away; such as are blessed with them are always blessed, and it is not in the power of men and devils to reverse them (Rom. 11:29, 8:30), the promises of the covenant, which are gone out of his mouth and lips are unalterable; what has been said of purposes may be said of promises, that they were made before the world were, by God, that cannot lie, who is all-wise, all-knowing, and all-powerful, and faithful to perform them; and besides, "all the promises are yea and amen in Christ". Nay, even God is unchangeable in his threatenings, he watches to bring the evil he has threatened, as well as the good he has promised; and he assuredly performs the one as the other (Dan. 9:14; Isa. 1:20; Jer. 23:20).

Nor is the unchangeableness of God in his word, whether in a way of promise or threatening, to be disproved by repentance being ascribed to him, which is to be taken in a limited sense, for in some sense it is absolutely denied of him (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29). When it is spoken of him, it is to be understood improperly and figuratively, after the manner of men, he doing like what men do, when they repent, that is, undo what they have done; as a potter, when he does not like a vessel he has made, breaks it to pieces: so when it repented God that he had made man on earth, and Saul king (Gen. 6:6; 1 Sam. 15:11), he destroyed man from off the earth, whom he had created; and took away the kingdom from Saul and his family, and gave it to another: in doing which he did not change his mind, but his operations and providences, and that according to his unchangeable will.

Nor is the immutability of God, in his promises and threatenings, to be disproved, by observing, that the promised good, and threatened evil, are not always done. For it should be considered, that what is promised or threatened, is either absolutely and unconditionally, or with a condition: now that anything promised or threatened, absolutely and unconditionally, is not performed, must be denied; but if with a condition, and that condition not performed, the change will appear to be not in God, but in men: and in all such cases where God does not what he said he would do, a condition is either expressed or implied (see Jer. 18:8, 9, 10). Thus God promised that he would dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem, in the temple, and there should be his "rest for ever" (Ps. 132:13, 14), and the people of Israel should dwell in their land, and eat the good of it; but then it was provided they were obedient to God, and abode in his service and worship, and kept his laws and ordinances (Isa. 1:19), but they failing herein, he departed from them, and suffered them to be carried captive: in all which there was a change of his dispensations, but no change of his will. He threatened the Ninevites with the destruction of their city within forty days, that is, unless they repented: they did repent, and were saved from ruin, God repenting of what he had threatened; which, though a change of his outward conduct towards them, he threatened them with, was no change of his will; for both their repentance, and their deliverance, were according to his unchangeable will (John 3:4, 10). Nor is the case of Hezekiah any objection to the immutability of God; the outward declaration ordered to be made to him, was, that he should "die and not live"; as he must have done quickly, according to the nature of second causes, his disease being mortal; but the secret will of God was, that he should live "fifteen years" longer, as he did; which implies neither contradiction nor change: the outward declaration

was made to humble Hezekiah, to set him a praying, and to make use of means; whereby the unchangeable will of God was accomplished.

Chapter 6

OF THE INFINITY OF GOD,
HIS OMNIPRESENCE AND ETERNITY.

The next attribute of God to be considered is, his "Infinity"; when we say that God is "infinite", the meaning is, that he is unbounded and unlimited, unmeasurable or immense, unsearchable and not to be comprehended. This attribute chiefly respects and includes the "omnipresence" and "eternity" of God; these are the two branches of it; he is not bounded by space, and therefore is everywhere; and he is not bounded by time, so he is eternal: and that he is in this sense infinite appears from his spirituality and simplicity, before established; he is not a body, consisting of parts; was he, he would be finite; for body, or matter, is a creature of time, and not eternal; and is limited to a certain place, and so not everywhere; but God is a Spirit: though this barely is not sufficient to prove him infinite; because there are finite spirits, as angels, and the souls of men; these are created spirits, and have a beginning, though they will have no end; which is owing not to themselves, but to the power of God, that supports them in their being; who could, if he would, annihilate them; and they are definitively in some place, and so, on all accounts, finite: but God is an uncreated Spirit; was before all time, so not bounded by it; and was before space or place were, and existed without it; and so not to be limited to it, and by it. He is the "first Being", and from whom all others have their being; "Before him there was no God formed, neither shall there be after him; yea, he is the first and the last" (Isa. 43:10 44:6) and therefore there is none before him nor above him, to limit and restrain him: he is an "independent" Being; all creatures depend on him, but he depends on none; all things are "of" him, "through" him, and "to" him, as the first cause and last end of them: all creatures live, and move, and have their being in him; but not he in them: men, angels, good and bad, are checked and limited by him; but not he by them. He is "immutable"; this attribute has been already established; but if he changes place, or is moved from place to place, or is sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another, he would be mutable: and if he rose from non-existence into existence, or there is any end of his days, he would not be unchangeable; but he is the "same", and his "years shall have no end": immutability infers both omnipresence and eternity, the two branches of Infinity. We commonly say that sin is infinite, and the truest reason that can be given for it is, because God is the object of it; for as an act, it is finite, being the act of a finite creature; but with respect to the object against whom it is committed, it is infinite, and requires an infinite satisfaction; which none but an infinite person can give, and which Christ is in his divine nature, and so gave to his sufferings and death, in his human nature united to him, an infinite value and virtue, whereby justice had from them an infinite satisfaction.

God is infinite in all his attributes; and which are indeed, himself, his nature; as has been observed, and are separately considered by us, as a relief to our mind, and helps to our better understanding it; and, perhaps, by observing some of these distinctly, we may have a clearer idea of the infinity of God. His "understanding" is infinite, as is expressly said (Ps. 147:5), it reaches to, and comprehends all things that are, though ever so numerous; to the innumerable company of angels in the highest heavens; to the innumerable stars in the lower ones; to the innumerable inhabitants of the earth, men, and beasts, and fowl; and to the innumerable creatures that swim in the sea; yea, not only to all that are in being, but to all things possible to be made, which God could have made if he would; these he sees and knows in his eternal mind, so that there is "no searching of his understanding" (Isa. 40:28), there is no end of it, and therefore infinite. The same may be said of his knowledge and wisdom, there is a bayov, a "depth", the apostle ascribes, to both; and which is not to be sounded by mortals (Rom. 11:33), he is "a God of knowledge" or "knowledges", of all things that are knowable (1 Sam. 2:3), he is the only and the all- wise God; and in comparison of him the wisdom of the wisest of creatures, the angels, is but folly (Job 4:18). The power of God is infinite; with him nothing is impossible; his power has never been exerted to the uttermost; he that has made one world, could have made millions; there is no end of his power, and his making of that, proves his "eternal power", that is, his

infinite power; for nothing but infinite power could ever have made a world out of nothing (Rom. 1:20; Heb. 11:3). His "goodness" is infinite, he is abundant in it, the earth is full of it, all creatures partake of it, and it endures continually; though there has been such a vast profusion of it from the beginning of the world, in all ages, it still abounds: there is no end of it, it is infinite, it is boundless; nor can there be any addition to it; it is infinitely perfect, "my goodness extends not to thee" (Ps. 16:2). God is infinite in his "purity, holiness, and justice": there is none holy as he is; or pure and righteous, with him; in comparison of him, the most holy creatures are impure, and cover themselves before him (Job 4:17,18; Isa. 6:2, 3), in short, he is infinitely perfect, and infinitely blessed and happy. We rightly give him titles and epithets of "immense" and "incomprehensible", which belong to his infinity. He is "immense", that is, unmeasurable; he measures all things, but is measured by none; who can take his dimensions? they are "as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?" If the heavens above cannot be measured, and the foundations of the earth beneath cannot be searched out, how should he be measured or searched out to perfection that made all these? (Job 11:7-9; Jer. 31:37). As there is an height, a depth, a length and breadth in the love of God, immeasurable (Eph. 3:18), so there is in every attribute of God, and consequently in his nature; his immensity is his magnitude, and of his "greatness" it is said, that it is "unsearchable" (Ps. 145:3), and therefore, upon the whole, must be "incomprehensible"; not only cannot be comprehended and circumscribed by space, or in place, "for the heaven of heavens cannot contain" him; but he is not to be comprehended by finite minds, that cannot conceive of him as he is; his omniscience is "too wonderful" for them, and "the thunder of his power who can understand?" Somewhat of him may be apprehended, but his nature and essence can never be comprehended, no not in a state of perfection; sooner may all the waters of the ocean be put into a nutshell, than that the infinite Being of God should be comprehended by angels or men, who are finite creatures; infinity is an attribute peculiar to God, and, as has been observed, its two chief branches are "omnipresence" and "eternity"; which will be next considered.

1. The "Omnipresence" of God, or his ubiquity, which, as it is included in his infinity, is a branch of it, and strictly connected with it, it must, be strongly concluded from it; for if God is infinite, that is, unbounded with respect to space and place, then he must be everywhere; and this is to be proved from his power, which is everywhere: as appears, not only in the creation of all things, as the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, the earth, and the ends of them, and all that is in them; but in his providence, supporting and sustaining them; for not only the creatures have their being in him, and from him, and therefore he must be near them; but "he upholds all things by his power", they consist in him, he provides for them, and preserves them all; and which is the argument the apostle uses to prove that he is not far from them (Acts 17:27, 28). The omnipresence of God may be argued from the distributions of his goodness to all; to angels and glorified saints, who partake of his special favours; to all men on earth, to whom he does not leave himself without a witness of his kindness to them, giving them food and raiment, and all things richly to enjoy; he is present among them, and opens his hand and plentifully and liberally communicates to them: as well as from his universal government of the world by his wisdom; for his kingdom rules over all, the kingdom of nature and providence is his, and "he is the Governor among the nations". And as he is everywhere by his power and providence, so he is by his knowledge; all things are naked and open to him, being all before him, and he present with them; though he is in the highest heaven, he can see and judge through the dark clouds, and behold all the inhabitants of the world, and their actions: and since these attributes of power, wisdom, and knowledge, are no other than his nature, or than himself, he must be everywhere by his essence; and which is most clear from the omnipresence of the divine nature in Christ, who, as a divine person, was in heaven, when he, as man, was here on earth (John 1:18 3:13), and, indeed, unless he was omnipresent, he could not be in whatsoever place two or three are gathered together in his name, or be in the midst of the candlesticks, the churches, or with his ministers, to the end of the world (Matthew 18:20, 28:20), for though this is to

be understood of his gracious presence, yet unless he was omnipresent, this could not be vouchsafed to all the saints, and all the churches, in all ages, at different places, at the same time; as when they are worshipping in different parts of the world; as in Europe, so in America. Now if God, personally considered, or in anyone of the divine Persons, is omnipresent, then God, essentially considered, must be so. The presence of God may be observed in a different manner; there is his glorious presence in heaven, where he, in a most eminent manner, displays the glory of his majesty to angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; and there is his powerful and providential presence with all his creatures, giving them being, and supporting them in it; and there is his gracious presence with good men, regenerating, sanctifying, comforting, and refreshing them; dwelling in them, carrying on his work of grace in them, to fit them for himself in glory; and all suppose his omnipresence: the heathens acknowledge this attribute; Anaxagoras calls him an infinite mind; and Pythagoras defines him, a mind that is diffused throughout all the parts of the world, and goes through all nature; and Sallustius observes, that he is not contained or comprehended in place. So the Jews say the Shecinah, or divine Majesty, is everywhere; and they call God Mwqm, "place", by an antiphrasis, as Buxtorf observes, because he is not local, who is not contained in any place, but gives place to all; and so the Jews themselves say[7], that he is the place of the world, but not the world his place, for he is without the world, and fills all worlds; and they further say, he is so called because in every place where the righteous are, he is with them; or as Aben Ezra, expresses it, because every place is full of his glory; agreeable to which Philo, the Jew, says, autov eautw topov he is place, full and sufficient to himself.

This attribute is most clearly expressed in several passages of Scripture, as particularly in Psalm 139:7-10 where the Psalmist asks, "Whither shalt 1 go from thy Spirit?" which, if it is to be understood of the third Person, the Spirit of the Father, and of the Son; if there is no going from him, then not from them, since the same nature is in the one as in the other; if there is no going from God, personally considered, or as in any of the divine Persons, then not from him, as essentially considered: or by his Spirit may be meant himself, for "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24). He adds, "Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" not his gracious presence, for a good man would never seek to flee from that, nothing being more desirable to him;

nor is there anything he more earnestly deprecates than to be cast away from it (Ps. 4:6, 7, 51:11), but his essential presence, which is everywhere; it is in the Hebrew text "from thy face"; and face signifies the essence and nature of God, which is invisible and incomprehensible (Ex. 33:20), then the Psalmist goes on to enumerate all places that could be thought of to flee to, and yet God was there; "If I ascend to heaven, thou art there": could he by any means climb up to heaven, there God is in all the glory of his Majesty; there is his palace, his habitation, and his throne. "If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there": whether the place where the wicked are turned, and the apostate angels cast; there God is sustaining them in their being, pouring in his wrath into their consciences, and continuing the punishment inflicted on them: or whether the grave is meant, which is sometimes the sense of the word used, and is a bed to saints (Job 17:13), there God is watching over their dust, preserving it from being lost, in order to raise it up at the last day. "If I take the wings of the morning", and fly as fast as the morning light, which soon reaches the furthest parts of the earth; or as the rays of the sun, which dart from east to west, at its rising, instantly; "and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea"; in the most remote islands of it, or in the uttermost parts of the western shore; "even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me": there should he experience the providential goodness and special favour of God to him; who leads, guides, and upholds his people at the ends of the earth, where some of them sometimes are, and where they have his presence (Isa. 45:22, 24:16), see a like enumeration of places in Amos 9:2, 3. Another passage of scripture, proving the Omnipresence of God, is in Isaiah 66:1. "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool". So immense is he that he sits upon the one, and treads on the other: "Where is the house that ye build unto me?" or where can a house be built for him? what place can be found for him he is not possessed of, and does not dwell in already? Stephen, the proto-martyr, produces this to prove, "that the

most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; that is, cannot be included in them, and limited to them, since he is everywhere, in heaven and in earth (Acts 7:47-50). But nowhere is the Omnipresence of God more expressly declared than in Jeremiah 23:23, 24. "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not afar off?" yea, he is both; he not only observes persons and things in heaven, which may be thought at hand, and near him; but persons and things on earth, and those at the greatest distance; he is as near to, and as present with the one as the other; and he sees and knows all that is done by them, as if he was at their elbow; and therefore adds, "Can any hide

himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord?" As some might foolishly imagine, supposing him to be limited and confined to heaven above, and was not present to see what was done below; especially in the dark and distant places of the earth: "Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" not only with inhabitants, and with all things, the effects of his power and goodness; but with his nature and essence, which exceeds all bounds of place and space. Hence the Jews call God by the name of "Makom", place; because he fills all places, and is contained in none; is not local and is infinite.

Nor is this to be disproved by other passages of Scripture, which may seem, at first sight, to discountenance or contradict it; not such as speak of mens' departing and fleeing from his presence, as Cain and Jonah are said to do (Gen. 4:16; John 1:3), for Cain only went either from the place where he and the Lord had been conversing; or from the public place of worship, at the east of the garden of Eden, where were the symbol of the divine presence, an altar, where he and his brother had sacrificed. Jonah's fleeing, was withdrawing himself from the service of God, and declining to go on his errand; foolishly imagining, that, by going beyond sea, he should avoid being urged to his duty; but he soon found his mistake, and that God was everywhere, and could meet with him by sea and by land. Likewise, not such that represent God as descending from heaven; as at the building of Babel, at the cry of the sin of Sodom, and on mount Sinai (Gen. 11:5, 7, 18:21; Ex. 19:18, 20), for these only denote some more than ordinary manifestations of his presence, or exertion of his power; as at Babel, by confounding the language; at Sodom, by destroying that, and the other cities; at Sinai, by giving the law out of the midst of fire, attended with thunder and lightning. Nor such as speak of the Lord not being with wicked men; particularly what Moses said to the disobedient Israelites, "The Lord is not among you; and he will not be with you" (Num. 14:42, 43) which he might very truly say, since the ark of the covenant, the symbol of the divine presence, remained in the camps and went not with them (Num. 14:44), nor had they any reason to believe that God would be so with them, as to prosper and succeed them, when they acted contrary to his express command: nor is God ever in such sense with wicked men, as with good men; namely, by his gracious presence: but this hinders not, but that he is with them by his omnipresence and power, supporting them in their being. Nor such passages which relate the departure of God from men; as from Samson and Saul (Judges 16:20; 1 Sam. 28:15), since this only respects the withdrawment of uncommon bodily strength from the one; and wisdom and prudence, courage and greatness of soul from the other; leaving him to the fears, distractions, and confusions of his mind; without any hope of success in war: nor such portions of Scripture which express the desertions and distance of God from his people, and their desires that he would return to them, and not cast them away from his presence (Ps. 10:1, 80:14, 51:11), since these only respect his gracious presence, the deprivation of that, and the return of it; the manifestations of his love and favour, and the withdrawment and renewal of them. And whereas it is urged against the omnipresence of God, that he is said to be in heaven, and that to be his habitation, and that men pray unto him as their Father in heaven (Ps. 115:3; Isa. 63:15; Matthew 5:9). In what peculiar sense God may be said to be in heaven, has been observed already; nor is he ever said to be in heaven "only", but in many places to be on earth also, and elsewhere (see Deut. 4:39; Isa. 66:1); though he is not contained in any place, as not on the earth, so neither can the heaven of heavens contain him (1 King 8:27), he was before there was any space or place; his nature, and so this attribute of omnipresence, were the same then as now: and should it be asked, Where did he dwell then? I answer, In himself, in his own immensity and eternity

(see Isa. 57:15). The objection from the pollution of the divine Being, through sordid and filthy places, in which he must be if omnipresent, scarce deserves any regard; since bodies only touch them and are capable of being defiled by them; not spirits, even created ones, as angels, and the souls of men; as the angel in the filthy den of lions where Daniel was, was not; nor the souls of men that are in filthy bodies; much less God a pure, infinite, and uncreated Spirit, who can no more be affected by such means, than the sun is, by its rays striking on a dunghill.

2. The "Eternity" of God belongs to his infinity; for as he is not bounded by space, so neither by time, and therefore eternal. He is often called "the everlasting God", and the "King eternal" (Gen. 21:33; Deut. 33:27; Isa. 40:28; Jer. 10:10; Rom. 16:26; 1 Tim. 1:17), yea, eternity itself (1 Sam. 15:29), and is said to inhabit it (Isa. 57:15).

These words, "eternal, everlasting", and "for ever", are sometimes used in an improper sense, as of things which are of a long duration, but limited, and have both a beginning and an end; as the everlasting possession of the land of Canaan, granted in the everlasting covenant of circumcision, and yet both are now at an end (Gen. 17:7, 8) the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses are said to be ordinances and statutes for ever; and yet they were designed to continue but for a time, and have been long since abolished (Num. 10:8, 15:15, 18:8,11,19, 23), the temple built by

Solomon is said to be a settled place for God to abide in for ever; yea, he himself says, that he would put his name in it for ever; and it should be his rest for ever; and yet it has been demolished long ago (1 King 8:13, 9:3; Ps. 132:14), the thrones of David and Solomon are said to be established for ever, and yet, if taken in a literal sense, they are no more: indeed, if understood spiritually, as David's Son and Antitype, his throne will be for ever and ever (2 Sam. 7:12,16), the earth is said to abide, and not be removed for ever (Ps. 104:5; Eccl. 1:4), yet both that and the heavens shall perish, though not as to substance, yet as to quality, form, figure, and present use. Sometimes this phrase "for ever", only respects the year of jubilee (Ex. 21:6), and, at most, but during life (1 Sam. 1:28).

Some creatures and things are said to be everlasting, and even eternal, which have a beginning, though they have no end; and this is what the schools call "aeviternity", as distinct from eternity: thus angels, and the souls of men, being creatures of God, have a beginning; though, being immaterial and immortal, shall never die. The happiness of the saints is called eternal glory, "eternal weight of glory; eternal life; an eternal inheritance; an house eternal in the heavens" (1 Peter 5:10; Titus 1:2; 2 Cor. 4:17, 5:1; Heb. 9:15). And the misery of the wicked is signified by suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, by everlasting fire, and everlasting punishment, (Jude 1:7; Matthew 25:41, 46), yet these have a beginning, though they will have no end; and so are improperly called eternal.

Eternity, properly so called, is that which is without beginning and end, and is without succession, or does not proceed in a succession of moments one after another; and is opposed to time, which has a beginning, goes on in a succession, and has an end: it is the measure of a creature's duration, and began when creatures began to be, and not before, and is proper to them, and not eternity, which only belongs to God. Thales being asked what God was, answered thus, what has neither beginning nor end, which is eternity. A Jewish writer defines it, "in which there is no former nor latter; nor order, nor succession of times; it being without motion". And which Boetius expresses in a few words,

"Eternity is the interminable or unbounded and perfect possession of life whole together."

And is thus described, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, thou art

God" (Ps. 90:2). Eternity, in this sense, is peculiar to God; as he only hath immortality, so he only has eternity; which must be understood not of the Father, or first person only, but of the Son and Spirit also; who are, with the Father, the one God; and possess the same undivided nature; of which Eternity is an attribute. So the Son, though as to his human nature, was born in the fulness of time; yet, as to his divine nature, "his goings forth were from of old, from everlasting": and as Mediator, in his office capacity, he was "set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was" (Mic. 5:2; Prov. 8:23, 24). The Spirit of God was concerned in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and so must be before

them; and which is the only idea we have of eternity, that it is before time and creatures were (Gen. 1:1, 2; Job 26:13; Ps. 33:6), and, according to some, the Spirit is called, "the eternal Spirit" (Heb. 9:14). Eternity is true of God, essentially considered, and in the sense explained, is to be proved, and that he is without beginning, without end, and without succession.

First, That he is without beginning, or from everlasting: this is put by way of interrogation (Hab. 1:12), not as a matter of doubt, but of certainty, and is strongly affirmed (Ps. 93:2), and may be proved,

1. From his nature and being; as from his "necessary self-existence": the existence of God is not arbitrary, but necessary: if arbitrary, it must be from his own will, or from the will of another; not from his own will, which would suppose him in being already; and then he must be before he existed, and must be, and not be, at the same instant; which are such contradictions as cannot be endured: not from the will of another, for then that other would be both prior and superior to him, and so be God, and not he: it remains, therefore, that he necessarily existed; and if so, then he must be eternal; since there was none before him; nor can any reason be given why he should necessarily exist at such an instant, and not before.

His eternity may be argued from a state of "non-existence" he must have been in, if not eternal; and if so, then there was an instant in which he was not; and if there was an instant in which he was not, then there was an instant in which there was no

God; and if so, there may be one again in which he may cease to be; for that which once was not, may again not be; and this will bring us into the depth of atheism; unless it could be supposed, which is quite irrational, that there was a God before him, and that there will be one after him; but this is strongly denied by himself; "Before me there was no God formed; neither shall there be after me" (Isa. 43:10).

The eternity of God may be inferred from his immutability, which has been already established: these two go together, and prove each other (Ps. 102:27), they are both to be observed in the great name of God, Jehovah, which signifies, he is, and was, and is to come, and takes in all time; but he is bounded by none, and is eternally the same; for if he is not eternal, he must have passed from non-existence into being; and what can be a greater change, than to come out of nothing into being?

Moreover, God is the most "perfect Being"; which he would not be, if not eternal; for not to be, or to have a beginning, is an imperfection; and it is an humbling consideration to man, a creature of time, that he is but "of yesterday" (Job 8:9). And if God was not eternal, let his beginning be when it may, in comparison of an eternity past, it would be but as yesterday; which can never be admitted of. Add to this, that God is the "first Cause" of all things, and therefore must be eternal: all wise and thoughtful men acknowledge a first Cause; and in their reasoning rise from one cause to another, until they arrive to a first Cause, and there stop, and which they truly call God; for otherwise there would be no subordination of causes: if there was not a first Cause, there would not be a second, nor a third, &c. but all would be first, and all eternal; and if God is the first Cause, then he is without a cause, and therefore must be eternal; hence he is so often called "the first and the last"; a phrase expressive of his eternity (Isa. 41:4, 44:6, 48:12). He is the "Creator" of all things, the heavens, earth, and sea, and all that in them are; and therefore must be before all things, as every artificer is before his work made by him; and if before all creatures, then before time, which begins with them, and therefore from eternity, since we can conceive of nothing before time but eternity.

2. The Eternity of God may be proved from his "attributes", several of which are said to be eternal, or from everlasting: the "power" of God is expressly called his "eternal power"; and is proved to be so by the works of creation, to which it must be prior (Rom. 1:20). The knowledge God has of all things is from eternity; though the things known are in time, his knowledge of them is before time; "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world", ap' aiwnov, from eternity (Acts 15:18). The "mercy" of God is eternal, it is said to be "from everlasting to everlasting" (Ps. 103:17). And so the "love" of God, which is no other than himself, for "God is love" (1 John 4:16), his love to his Son, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person", was from everlasting; before the earth, the hills, and mountains were formed, then was he by him, "as one brought up with him", his darling and delight (Prov. 8:30), our

Lord himself says, his Father loved him before the foundation of the world (John 17:24), and as early did he love his elect in him; for he loved them as he loved him (John 17:23), even with an everlasting love, a love which is both from everlasting and to everlasting (Jer. 31:3).

3. That God is Eternal, may be argued from his purposes, counsels, and decrees; which are said to be "of old", that is, from everlasting (Isa. 25:1), this is true of them in general; for no new purposes and resolutions rise up, or are framed by him in his mind; for then there would be something in him which was not before; which would imply mutability. Besides, they are expressly said to be "eternal" (Eph. 3:11), and if they are eternal, then God, in whom they are, and by whom they are formed, must be eternal also. In particular, the purpose of God, according to election, or his choice of men to everlasting life, is eternal; not only was before men had done any good or evil (Rom. 9:11), but they were chosen by him "from the beginning" (2 Thess. 2:13), not from the beginning of the gospel coming to them, nor of their faith and conversion by it; but from the beginning of time, and before time, even "before the foundation of the world", as is in so many words expressed (Eph. 1:4), wherefore God, that chose them to salvation, must be eternal. Christ is eminently called the elect of God, being as Man and Mediator, chosen out from among the people (Isa. 42:1; Ps 89:19), and the appointment of him, to be the Redeemer and Saviour of men, or the preordination of him to be the Lamb slain for the redemption of his people, was before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20), and therefore God, that foreordained him thereunto, must be as early.

4. The Eternity of God may be concluded from the covenant of grace, styled an "everlasting covenant" (2 Sam. 23:5), not only because it will endure immoveable and unalterable for ever, but because it was from everlasting; for though it is sometimes called a new covenant, yet not because newly made, or only newly manifested; but because it is always new, and never waxes old. Christ, the Mediator of it, and with whom it was made, was set up from everlasting as such; and his goings forth in it, representing his people, and acting for them, were from of old, from everlasting (Prov. 8:22, 23; Mic. 5:2), and he had a glory with God in it before the world began (John 17:5), there were blessings of goodness laid up in it, and with which Christ, the Mediator of it, was anticipated; yea, the people of God were blessed with these spiritual blessings in Christ, as "they were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and had grace given them in him before the world began" (Eph. 1:3, 4; 2 Tim. 1:9). Promises also were made as early to Christ, and to them in him, into whose hands they were put, and in whom they are, yea and amen; particularly, eternal life was promised by God, that cannot lie, before the world was (Titus 1:2). Now if there was a covenant made by God from everlasting, and Christ was set up by him so early, as the Mediator of it; and there were blessings of grace, and promises of grace, made by him before time was, then he must be from everlasting.

5. It may be proved from the works of God in time: all creatures are the works of his hands; all beings have their being from him; and time beginning with them, he that made them must be before all time, and therefore eternal: this is the argument used to prove the eternity of Christ, the Word, that he was in the beginning, that is, from eternity with God; "because all things were made by him, and that he is the firstborn of every creature, and before all things, because all things are created by him, and by him do all things consist" (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17), and the same proves the eternity of God; for all things are from him, and so have a beginning; but he from whom they are, is from none, has no cause of his being, and therefore must be eternal. So creation is made a proof of his eternal power and Godhead (Rom. 1:20), creation proves his eternity, and his eternity proves his deity. Hence Thales said, "The most ancient of Beings is God."

Secondly, That God is to everlasting, and without end, may be proved from his

"spirituality" and "simplicity", already established; what is mixed and compounded, and consists of parts, may be resolved into them again, and so be dissolved, as bodies may; but spirits, such as angels and the souls of men, being immaterial, are immortal, and continue for ever; and God being a Spirit, an infinite and uncreated one, simple, and uncompounded of parts, must much more be so; and therefore is called, "The incorruptible God" (Rom. 1:23). It may be argued from his "independency", he is self-existent; the first

Cause, and without any cause; he is the only Potentate, "God over all, blessed for ever", and dependant on none; there is none above him, nor superior to him, that can put an end, to his being; nor can it be thought, he being in such a state of infinite happiness, would ever put an end to it himself. His eternity is to be proved from his "immutability"; for those, as before observed, infer one another. God is immutable, and therefore without end; for what can be a greater change than for a being not to be? Hence God is opposed to creatures, to mortal men, whose flesh is as grass, the most changeable and perishing of anything, and even to the heaven and the earth, they being such; but he is unchangeably the same; and so there is no end of his years (1 Peter 1:24, 25; Ps. 102:26, 27). This may be inferred from his "dominion" and government; he is, and sits King for ever; he is an everlasting King, his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation, and will never end (Jer. 10:10; Ps. 10:16, 29:10; Dan. 4:3), and therefore he himself must be to everlasting. Moreover, he is not only called the living God (Jer. 10:10), but is often said to "live for ever and ever" (Rev. 4:9,10, 10:6). Hence his purposes and decrees are never frustrated, because he ever lives to bring them into execution: men take up resolutions, and form schemes, which, by reason of death, are never executed; their purposes are broken, and their thoughts perish; but "the counsel of the Lord stands for ever; and the thoughts of his heart to all generations" (Ps. 33:11), and therefore he himself must endure for ever: his promises are all fulfilled; not only because he is able and faithful to perform, but because he continues for ever to make them good; and therefore is said to "keep truth for ever" (Ps. 146:6). His covenant is firm and sure; more immoveable than rocks and mountains; it stands fast, with Christ, for ever, and God commands it for ever; because he ever lives to keep it. His love is to everlasting, as well as from it; he rests in it; nothing can separate from it; and "with everlasting kindness he gathers his people, and has mercy on them"; and therefore must be for ever: his grace, mercy, and goodness, continually endure, and therefore he himself must; and "he will be the portion of his people for ever"; their everlasting ALL in ALL; and they shall reign and dwell with him for evermore. All which proves him to be without end.

Thirdly, The Eternity of God, or his being from everlasting to everlasting, is without succession, or any distinctions of time succeeding one another, as moments, minutes, hours, days, months, and years: the reasons are, because he existed before such were in being; "Before the day was, I am he" (Isa. 43:13), before there was a day, before the first day of the creation, before there were any days, consisting of so many hours, and these of so many minutes; and if his eternity past, may it be so called, was without successive duration, or without succeeding moments, and other distinctions of time, why not his duration through time, and to all eternity, in the same manner? Should it be said, that days and years are ascribed to God; it is true, they are; but it is in accommodation and condescension to our weak minds, which are not capable of conceiving of duration but as successive: and besides, those days and years ascribed to God are expressly said not to be as ours (Job 10:5). He is, indeed, called, "The Ancient of Days" (Dan. 7:13), not ancient "in" days, or "through" them, as aged persons are said to be in years, and well stricken in them; not so God: the meaning is, that he is more ancient than days; he was before all days, and his duration is not to be measured by them. And it may be observed, that the differences and distinctions of time are together ascribed to God, and not as succeeding one another; he is "the same yesterday, today, and for ever"; these are all at once, and together with him; he is he "which is, and was, and is to come" (Heb. 13:8; Rev. 1:4), these meet together in his name, Jehovah; and so in his nature; he co-exists, with all the points of time, in time; but is unmoved and unaffected with any, as a rock in the rolling waves of the sea, or a tower in a torrent of gliding water; or as the rod or pin of a sundial, which has all the hours of the day surrounding it, and the sun, by it casts a shade upon them, points at and distinguishes them, but the stile stands firm and unmoved, and not affected thereby: hence it is that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years; and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8). But if his duration was successive, or proceeded by succeeding moments, days, and years; one day would be but one day with him, and not a thousand; and a thousand days would answer to a thousand days, and not be as one only. Besides, if his duration was measured by a succession of moments,

&c. then he would not be "immense, immutable", and "perfect", as he is: not "immense", or unmeasurable, if to be measured by minutes, hours, days, months, and years; whereas, as he is not to be measured by space, so not by time: nor "immutable"; since he would be one minute what he was not before, even older, which cannot be said of God; for as a Jewish writer well observes, it cannot be said of him, that he is older now than he was in the days of David, or when the world was created; for he is always, both before the world was made, and after it will cease to be; times make no change in him. Nor "perfect"; for if his duration was successive, there would be every moment something past and gone, lost and irrecoverable; and something to come not yet arrived to and obtained; and in other respects he must be imperfect: the "knowledge" of God proves him without successive duration. God knows all things, past, present, and to come, that is, which are so to us; not that they are so to him; these he knows at once, and all together, not one thing after another, as they successively come into being; all things are open and manifest to him at once and together, not only what are past and present, but he calls things that are not yet, as though they were; he sees and knows all in one view, in his all-comprehending mind: and as his knowledge is not successive, so not his duration. Moreover, in successive duration, there is an order of former and latter; there must be a beginning from whence every flux of time, every distinction proceeds; every moment and minute has a beginning, from whence it is reckoned, so every hour, day, month, and year: but as it is said of Christ, with respect to his divine nature, so it is true of God, essentially considered, that he has "neither beginning of days, nor end of life" (Heb. 7:3). In short, God is Eternity itself, and inhabits eternity; so he did before time, and without succession; so he does throughout time; and so he will to all eternity. The very heathens themselves had a notion of their supreme God, as eternal: and this is the definition Thales gave of God; for being asked, What is God? answered, What has neither beginning nor end; and therefore calls him, the most Ancient. Sallustius denied that the nature of God was made, because it always was.

Chapter 7

OF THE LIFE OF GOD.

Having considered the attributes of Simplicity, Immutability, Infinity, Omnipresence, and Eternity, which belong to God, as an uncreated, infinite, and eternal Spirit; and which distinguish him from all other spirits; I shall now proceed to consider such as belong to him as an active and operative Spirit, as all spirits are, more or less; but he is infinitely so, being "actus, purus, et simplicissimus"; he is all act; and activity supposes life and operations; power, such as God performs, almighty power, or omnipotence; which are the attributes next to be considered; and first his "life". Some think this is not a single perfection of God, but expressive of all the divine perfections: and, indeed, it is his nature and essence, it is himself; and so is every other attribute his nature, under different considerations, and as variously displayed; wherefore this may be treated of as a distinct attribute; and a very eminent and fundamental one it is; by which God exerts his nature and essence, and displays all his perfections. And in order to apprehend somewhat of the life of God, for comprehend it we cannot, it may be necessary to consider life in the creatures, what that is; and by rising from the lowest degree of life to an higher, and from that to an higher still, we may form some idea of the life of God, though an inadequate one. Life is a principle in the creature by which it moves itself; what has motion has life, and what has not is without it; as long as a creature has any motion, it is supposed to have life; but when motionless, it is thought to be dead; the phrases, to move, and to have life, are synonymous, and express the same thing; (see Gen. 7:21, 22, 23) but it is not any kind of motion that can lay a claim to life; the sun, moon, and planets move, yet they are inanimate; so a dead carcass may be moved, though it cannot move; it is self- motion only that shows a creature to be alive, that is under a divine agency; for all creatures live and move and have their being in and of God; and hence it is that such who only seem to have self-motion, are, in an improper sense, said to live; as a fountain, flowing with water, is called living, (Gen. 26:19) to which the allusion is in Song of Solomon 4:15; Jeremiah 2:13; John 4:10, and water that is stagnated in pools and lakes, and remains unmoved, is dead. The lowest degree of real life is in vegetables, in herbs, plants, and trees; which

are truly said to live (Ezek. 47:7, 9), for though they have not a local motion, yet a motion of growth and increase; they become bigger and larger, and rise up to a greater height, and put forth leaves and fruit; which shows life. In animals there is an higher degree of life; in them there is the breath of life, which is common with the bodies of men, who live the same animal life with them; these are possessed of sensitive powers, of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling; and perform the common functions of life, eating, drinking, walking, &c. But neither of these sorts of life can assist us in our ideas of the life of God; there being nothing in theirs similar to his. There is an higher degree of life still, which is in rational creatures, angels, and the souls of men; by which they are capable not only of operating on bodies, on matter, without them, but of performing acts within themselves, by a self-motion, suitable to their nature as spirits, and rational ones; such as to understand, to will, to choose, and refuse; love, and hate, &c. which may be called the motions of the mind; as the first thoughts of, and inclinations to sin, are called, "motions" (Rom. 7:5). And now these internal acts of the mind, which are good in angels or men, and show a rational life in them, most resemble what is in God; who can, in, and of, and by himself, understand all things, will and decree whatever he pleases; and loves and hates what is agreeable or disagreeable to him, &c. But what comes nearest to the life of God, that we can conceive of, is that which is in regenerated persons, who have a principle of spiritual life, grace, and holiness, implanted in them, by the Spirit of God, and are made partakers of the divine nature, have Christ formed in them; "and they live, yet not they, but Christ lives in them"; and, by having such a principle of life wrought in them, they understand divine and spiritual things; they will that which is spiritually good, and do what is such; the Spirit of God working in them a disposition thereunto, and giving them power to perform; "being in Christ, and created in him unto good works", they perform vital spiritual acts, and live a life, a spiritual holy life, and which is called, "the life of God", unconverted men are strangers to (Eph. 4:18). Now this most resembles the life of God, especially, as it will be perfect and eternal in a future state, though it comes abundantly short of what is in God; every imperfection in the life of angels and men, carried to its greatest height, must be removed from God; and everything that is great and excellent must be ascribed to him; and as infinitely transcending what is in finite creatures. God is life essentially, life eternally, and life efficiently.

1. God is life "essentially", it is his nature and essence, it is himself, it is in and of himself. The natural life of creatures is not in and of themselves; but is in God, and from him: the spiritual and eternal life of the saints is not in and of themselves; but is from God, "hid with Christ in God". But the life of God is in and of himself; "the Father has life in himself" (John 5:26), and so has the Son and Word of God (John 1:1, 4), and likewise the Spirit, called, therefore, "the spirit of life" (Rev. 11:11), and what is true of all the Persons in the Godhead, they partaking of the same undivided nature and essence, and living the same life, is true of God, essentially considered. And as the life of God is "of himself", it is independent; there is no cause from whence it is, or on which it depends. The natural and spiritual life of men is of God, depends on him; they live not so much their own life as another's; they have their life from God in every sense, and are supported in it by him; "he is thy life, and the length of thy days" (Deut. 30:20). But God lives his own life; which, as it is without a cause, has no dependence on any other. It does not arise from any composition of parts, and the union of them, as the life, even the natural life, of man does, who consists of soul and body; and his life is the result of the union of these, which when dissolved, it ceases; for "the body without", or separate from, "the spirit", or soul, "is dead" (James 2:26). And the spiritual life of saints arises from the union of Christ and his Spirit, as a principle of life unto them; which, could it be dissolved, as it cannot, death would ensue, even death spiritual and eternal: but God is a Spirit, a simple and uncompounded Being; consists not of parts, from the union of which his life arises; and so his life is "infinite", "eternal", and "immutable", as also "most perfect". In the life of creatures, even in the highest degree; being finite and dependant, there is always something wanting; but in God there is none; he is "El- Shaddai", God all-sufficient, blessed and happy in himself for evermore.

The scriptures frequently speak of God as the "living God" both in the Old and New Testament, (Deut. 5:26;

Josh. 3:10; Ps. 42:2, 84:2; Matthew 16:16; 2 Cor. 6:16) who has life in himself, and gives life to all that have it; and not the Father only, but the Son of God also, is called the living God, (Heb 3:12 and the Spirit is called the Spirit of the living God, (2 Cor. 3:3 each person is the living God, and God, essentially considered, is so; and this title and epithet he has in opposition to, and contradistinction from, them that are not by nature God: the living God is opposed to idols, lifeless and motionless, (Jer. 10:10, 15, 16; Acts 14:15; 1 Thess. 1:9) he is distinguished by this essential attribute of his from the first objects of idolatrous worship, the sun, moon, and stars, which are inanimate; from heroes, kings, and emperors, deified after their death; which idolatry was very early; and worshipping them is called eating the sacrifices of the dead (Ps. 106:28), and from all images of wood, stone, brass, silver, and gold, which are dumb idols, and lifeless ones (see Ps. 115:4-7). And God is not only acknowledged to be the living God, and to live for ever and ever, by some of the greatest personages, and proudest monarchs that ever were upon earth, and who even had set up themselves for God, (Dan. 4:34 6:26 but he asserts it of himself, which must be true, and may be depended on; "And lift up my hand, and say, I live for ever", (Deut. 32:40. yea; it is an oath of his affirming the same, and it is the common form of swearing with him, "as I live, saith the Lord"; and which is very frequently used by him (see Num. 14:28) and this is no other than swearing by his life, which is himself; "for when he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself" (Heb 6:13), and so both men and angels swear by the living God; "by him that lives for ever and ever" (Jer. 5:2, 12:16; Dan. 12:7; Rev. 10:5, 6), which distinguishes him from, and prefers him to all other beings: and, indeed, he is "most properly" said to live; the life of creatures is no life in comparison of his; especially the life of man: what is it? "it is but a vapour, that appears for a while, and then vanishes away" (James 4:14). But,

2. God is life eternally, without beginning, succession, or end; he is without beginning of life or end of days, and without any variableness; "the same today, yesterday and for ever"; he that is the "true God", is also "eternal life" (1 John 5:20). It is indeed said of Christ, the Word and Son of God, that he is the "eternal life", which was with "the Father" from eternity, before "manifested" unto men; and so lives from eternity to eternity; and, as before observed, what is true of God personally, is true of him essentially considered: he lived from eternity, and will live for ever and ever; as several of the above scripture testimonies assure us; and which may be concluded from the "simplicity" of his nature: what consists of parts may be resolved into those parts again, and so cease to be; but God is a simple and uncompounded Being, as has been established; not consisting of parts, and so not capable of being reduced to them, or being dissolved, and therefore must live for ever: and from his "independency"; he has no cause prior to him, from whom he has received his life, or on whom it depends; there is none above him, superior to him, that can take away his life from him, as he can from his creatures, who are below him, and dependent on him; but he is above all, and dependent on none.

Likewise from his "immutability"; there is no change, nor shadow of change, in him; and yet, if his life was not eternal, he must be subject to the greatest of changes, death; but he is the same, and of his years there is no end (Ps. 102:27). The same arguments which prove his "eternity", must prove also that he lives for ever; he "is the true God", "the living God, and an everlasting King" (Jer. 10:10), he is called "immortal eternal", (1 Tim. 1:17) the very heathens have such a notion of Deity as immortal; nothing is more common with them than to call their gods, "the immortal ones". God, says Socrates {1}, is, I think, the very species or idea of life, and if anything else is immortal, and confessed by all that he cannot perish. Aristotle {2}, has this remarkable observation, "The energy, act, or operation of God, is immortality, this is everlasting life; wherefore there must needs be perpetual motion in God." And he reports {3}, that Alcmaeon supposed that the soul was immortal, because it was like to the immortals. But our God, the true God, is he "who only hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:16), that is, who hath it in and of himself, and gives it to others. Angels are immortal, they die not; but then this immortality is not of themselves, but of God, who supports and continues them in their being; for as he made them out of nothing, he could, if he would, annihilate them, and bring them to nothing again: the souls of men are immortal; they cannot be killed,

nor do they die with their bodies; but then what has been said of angels may be said of them. The bodies of men, after the resurrection, are immortal; this mortal then puts on immortality, and always is clothed with it, and ever continues; but this is the gift of God, and the effect of his will and power; yea, even the bodies of the wicked are immortal, but not of themselves, it is even against their wills; they choose and seek for death, but cannot have it; their torments are endless, and the smoke of them ascends for ever and ever. God only has immortality in and of himself.

3. God is life "efficiently", the source and spring, the author and giver of life to others; "With thee is the fountain of life", (Ps. 36:9 which he would not be, if he had not life in and of himself, essentially, originally, independently, most properly, and in the most perfect manner.

God is the author and giver of life, from the lowest to the highest degree of it. The vegetative life that is in herbs, plants, and trees, is from him, and supported by him; and he takes it away, when his Spirit blows upon them (Gen. 1:11,12; Isa. 40:7). The animal life is owing to him; the life of all animals, of the fishes in the sea, the fowl of the air, and the beasts of the field; and he gives them life and breath; and when he takes it away, they die, and return to the dust (Gen. 1:20, 21, 24, 25; Acts 17:25; Ps. 104:29). The rational life in angels and men, is from him; angels are made rational living spirits by him, and in him they consist: to men he grants life and favour, and his visitation preserves their spirit, and he is the God of their life, that gives it, and, continues it, and takes it away at pleasure (Ps. 42:8). No creature can give real life; men may paint to the life, as we say, but they cannot give life: no man can make a living fly; he may as soon make a world.

The spiritual life that is in any of the sons of men, is from God. Men, in a state of unregeneracy, are dead, dead in a moral and spiritual sense: and while they are corporally alive, they are dead in trespasses and sins; and because of them dead as to their understanding of, will to, affection for what is morally and spiritually good; and their very living in sin is no other than death: nor can they quicken themselves; nothing can give what it has not; the resurrection of the dead, in a corporal sense, requires almighty power; and, in a spiritual sense, the exceeding greatness of God's power; so that it is not by might or power of man, but by the Spirit and Power of the living God. It is God, that of his rich mercy, and because of his great love, and by his almighty power, quickens men dead in sin, dead in law, and exposed unto eternal death; he speaks life into them, when he calls them by his grace, breathes into the dry bones the breath of life, and they live spiritually; a life of justification, through the righteousness of Christ, which is the justification of life, or adjudges and entitles them to eternal life; and a life of faith on Christ, and of holiness from him; they live in newness of life, soberly, righteously, and godly; which life is preserved in them, it springs up to everlasting life; it is hid and secured with Christ in God, is a never dying one, and shall issue in eternal life; in which all the three Persons in the Godhead are concerned (John 5:21, 25, 11:25; Rom. 8:2). Eternal life, so often spoken of in scripture, as what the saints shall enjoy for evermore, is of God; it is what he has provided and prepared for them in his council and covenant: what they are foreordained unto in his purposes and decrees, and do most certainly enjoy; what he who cannot lie has promised to them before the world began, and which is his free gift, and flows from his free favour and good will, through Christ, (Acts 13:48; Titus 1:2; Rom. 6:23) and in which the Son and Spirit have a concern; Christ came that his people might have it, and he gave his flesh for the life of them; it is put into his hands, and he has a power to dispose of it, and give it to his sheep; so that none of them shall perish, but have it (1 John 5:12; John 17:2, 10:28). And the Spirit, whose grace springs up to it, and issues in it; and he dwells in his people, as the earnest of it, and works them up for it, and brings them into the full enjoyment of it. Now God must have life in the highest degree of it, as explained; even essentially, originally, infinitely, and perfectly; or he could never give life in every sense unto his creatures; and he must live for ever, to continue eternal life, particularly to his people, and preserve them in it.

Chapter 8

OF THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.

Some of the names of God, in the Hebrew language, are thought to be derived from words which signify firmness and stability, strength and power; as Adonai,

El, El- Shaddai, which latter is always rendered almighty, (Gen. 17:1; Ex. 6:3) and very frequently in the book of Job; and the Greek word navTOKpaxcop is used of God in the New Testament, and is translated almighty and omnipotent, (Rev. 1:8, 4:8, 19:6) and power is one of the names of God, (Matthew 26:64 compared with Heb. 1:3) the angel said to the Virgin Mary, "with God nothing shall be impossible", (Luke 1:37) and Epicharmus, the heathen, has the same expression; and so Linus: Omnipotence is essential to God, it is his nature; a weak Deity is an absurdity to the human mind: the very heathens suppose their gods to be omnipotent, though without reason; but we have reason sufficient to believe that the Lord our God, who is the true God, is Almighty; his operations abundantly prove it; though if he had never exerted his almighty power, nor declared it by any external visible works, it would have been the same in himself; for it being his nature and essence, was from eternity, before any such works were wrought, and will be when they shall be no more; and hence it is called, his "eternal power", (Rom. 1:20) and may be concluded from his being an uncreated eternal "Spirit". All spirits are powerful, as their operations show; we learn somewhat of their power from our own spirits or souls, which are endowed with the power and faculties of understanding, willing, reasoning, choosing and refusing, loving and hating, &c. and not only so, but are able to operate upon the body; and to quicken, move, direct and guide it to do whatever they please, and that that is capable of; and angelic spirits are more powerful still, they excel in strength, and are called mighty angels, (Ps. 103:20; 2 Thess. 1:7) and have done very strange and surprising things; one of them slew in one night one hundred and eighty five thousand men, in the Assyrian camp, (2 King 19:35) and what then cannot God, the uncreated and infinite Spirit, do; who has endowed these with all their power, might, and strength? can less than omnipotence be ascribed to him? This may be inferred from his "infinity". God is an infinite Being, and so is every perfection of his; his understanding is infinite, and such is his power; for, as a Jewish writer argues, since power is attributed to God, it must be understood that it is infinite; for if it was finite, it might be conceived that there was a greater power than his; and so privation would fall on God; as if there was not in him the greater power that is to be conceived of. He is unlimited and unbounded, as to space, and so is omnipresent; and he is unlimited and unbounded as to time, and so is eternal; and he is unlimited and unbounded as to power, and so is omnipotent: to deny, or to call in question, his omnipotence, is to limit the Holy One of Israel, which ought not to be done; this the Israelites are charged with, for distrusting his power to provide for them in the wilderness (Ps. 78:19, 20, 41). The omnipotence of God may be argued from his "independency"; all creatures depend on him, but he depends on none; there is no cause prior to him, nor any superior to him, or above him, that can control him; none, who, if his hand is stretched out, can turn it back, or stop it from proceeding to do what he will; none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou? "he does what he pleases in heaven and in earth" (Dan. 4:35). Moreover, this attribute of God may be confirmed by his "perfection"; God is a most perfect being; but that he would not be if anything was wanting in him: want of power in a creature is an imperfection, and would be so in God, was that his case; but as he is great, his power is great; there is an exuberance, an exceeding greatness of power in him, beyond all conception and expression; he is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think" (Eph. 1:19 3:20). And this may be strengthened yet more by observing the "uselessness" of many other "perfections" without it; for what though he knows all things fit and proper to be done, for his own glory, and the good of his creatures, what does it signify, if he cannot do them? and though he may, in the most sovereign manner, will, determine, and decree, such and such things to be done; of what avail is it if he cannot carry his will, determinations, and decrees into execution? what dependence can there be upon his faithfulness in his promises, if he is not able also to perform? and of what use is his goodness, or an inclination and disposition in him to do good, if he cannot do it? or where is his justice in rendering to every man according to his works, if he cannot execute it? So that, upon the whole, it is a most certain truth, that "power belongs to God", as the Psalmist says, (Ps. 62:11) and to whom he ascribes it, even "power" and "might", by which two words he expresses the greatness of power, superlative

power, power in the highest degree, even omnipotence, (IChron. 29:12) and it may be observed, that in all the doxologies or ascriptions of glory to God, by angels and men, power or might is put into them (Rev. 4:10,11, 5:13, 7:11,12). And indeed it belongs to no other; it is peculiar to God: nor is it communicable to a creature; since that creature would then be God; for omnipotence is his nature; nor is it even communicable to the human nature of Christ, for the same reason; for though the human nature is united to a divine person, who is omnipotent, it does not become omnipotent thereby; though the two natures, divine and human, are closely united in Christ; yet the properties of each are distinct and peculiar; and it is easy to observe, that the human nature of Christ was subject to various infirmities, though sinless ones, and stood in need of help, strength, and deliverance; for which, as man, he prayed; and at last, he was crucified, through weakness (Heb. 4: 15; Ps. 22:19, 20; 2 Cor. 13:4).

And as for Matthew 28:18 that is said not of the attribute of divine power, which is not "given" him, but is natural to him, as a divine person, but of his authority over all, and their subjection to him as Mediator.

The power of God reaches to all things, and therefore is, with propriety, called Omnipotence; all things are possible with God, and nothing impossible; this is said by an angel, and confirmed by Christ, (Luke 1:37; Mark 14:36) what is impossible with men is possible with God; what cannot be done according to the nature of things, the laws, rules, and course of nature, may be done by the God of nature, who is above these, and not bound by them, and sometimes acts contrary to them; as when he stopped the sun in its course, in the times of Joshua; made iron to swim by the hands of the prophet Elisha; and suffered not fire to burn in the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, so that the three persons cast into it were not hurt by it, nor their clothes so much as singed, nor the smell of fire upon them: whereas, it is the nature

of the sun to go on in its course, without stopping, nor can any creature stop it; and for ponderous bodies, as iron, to sink in water; and for fire to burn. There are some things, indeed, which God cannot do, and which the Scriptures express as, that "he cannot deny himself", (2 Tim. 2:13) nor do anything that is contrary to his being, his honour and glory, or subversive of it; thus, for instance, he cannot make another God, that would be contrary to himself, to the unity of his Being, and the declaration of his Word; "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord", (Deut. 6:4) he cannot make a finite creature infinite; that would be to do the same, and there would be more infinites than one, which is a contradiction; he cannot raise a creature to such dignity as to have divine perfections ascribed to it, it has not, which would be a falsehood; or to have religious worship and adoration given it, which would be denying himself, detracting from his own glory, and giving it to another, when he only is to be served and worshipped: in such manner it is also said of him, that he "cannot lie", (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18) for this would be contrary to his truth and faithfulness; he can do nothing that is contrary to his attributes; he cannot commit iniquity, he neither will nor can do it; for that would be contrary to his holiness and righteousness; (see Job 34:10,12, 36:23) he cannot do anything that implies a contradiction; he cannot make contradictions true; a thing to be, and not to be at the same time; or make a thing not to have been that has been; he can make a thing not to be, which is, or has been; he can destroy his own works; but not make that not to have existed, which has existed; nor make an human body to be everywhere; nor accidents to subsist without subjects; with many other things which imply a manifest contradiction and falsehood: but then these are no prejudices to his omnipotence, nor proofs of weakness; they arise only out of the abundance and fullness of his power; who can neither do a weak thing nor a wicked thing, nor commit any falsehood; to do, or attempt to do, any such things, would be proofs of impotence, and not of omnipotence.

The power of God may be considered as absolute, and as actual or ordinate. According to his absolute power, he can do all things which are not contrary to his nature and perfections, and which does not imply a contradiction; even though he has not done them nor never will: thus he could have raised up children to Abraham out of stones, though he would not; and have sent twelve legions of angels to deliver Christ out of the hands of his enemies; but did not (Matthew 3:9, 26:53). He that has made one world, and how many

more we know not for certainty, (Heb. 11:3) could have made ten thousand; he that has made the stars in the heaven innumerable, could have vastly increased their number; and he that has made an innumerable company of angels, and men on earth, as the sand of the sea, could have added to them infinitely more. The power of God has never been exerted to its uttermost; it is sufficient to entitle him to omnipotence, that he has done, and does, whatsoever he pleases, and that whatsoever is made, is made by him, and nothing without him; which is what may be called, his ordinate and actual power; or what he has willed and determined, is actually done; and of this there is abundant proof, as will appear by the following instances.

1. In creation; the heaven, earth, and sea, and all that in them are, were created by God, is certain; and these visible works of creation are proofs of the invisible attributes of God, and particularly, of his "eternal power" (Acts 4:24; Rom. 1:20). Creation is making something out of nothing; which none but omnipotence can effect; (see Heb. 11:3) no artificer, though ever so expert, can work without materials, whether he works in gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, stone, or in anything else: the potter can cast his clay into what form and figure he pleases, according to his art, and make one vessel for one use, and another for another; but he cannot make the least portion of clay: but God created the first matter out of which all things are made; and which were made out of things not before existing by the omnipotent Being; whom the good woman animating her son to martyrdom, exhorted to acknowledge, in the Apocrypha: "I beseech thee, my son, look upon the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, and consider that God made them of things that were not; and so was mankind made likewise." (2 Maccabees 7:28)

Nor can any artificer work without tools; and the more curious his work, the more curious must his tools be: but God can work without instruments, as he did in creation; it was only by his all commanding word that everything sprung into being, (Gen. 1:3; Ps. 36:9) and everything created was done at once; creation is an instantaneous act, is without succession, and requires no length of time to do it in; everything on the several days of creation were done immediately: on the first day God said, "Let there be light"; and it immediately sprung out of darkness: on the second day he said, "Let there be a firmament", an expanse; and at once the airy heaven was stretched out like a curtain around our earth: on the third day he said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, herbs, and fruit trees"; and they arose directly out of it, in all their greenness and fruitfulness: on the fourth day he said, "Let there be lights in the heavens"; and no sooner was it said, but the sun, moon, and stars, blazed forth in all their lustre and splendour: on the fifth and sixth days orders were given for the waters to bring forth fish, and fowl, and beasts, and cattle of every kind; and they accordingly brought them forth in full perfection immediately; and

last of all, man was at once made, complete and perfect, out of the dust of the earth, and the breath of life was breathed into him: and though there were six days appointed, one for each of these works, yet they were instantaneously performed on those days; and this time was allotted not on account of God, who could have done them all in a moment; but for the sake of men, who, when they read the history of the creation, there is a stop and pause at each work, that they may stand still and meditate upon it, and wonder at it. Whereas the works of men require time; and those that are most curious, longer still. Add to all this, that the works of creation were done without weariness; no labour of men is free from it: if it be the work of the brain, the fruit of close reasoning, reading, meditation, and study; "much study", the wise man says, "is a weariness of the flesh", (Eccl. 12:12) or if it be manual operation, it is labour and fatigue; but the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, though he has wrought such stupendous works, "fainteth not, neither is weary", (Isa. 40:28) and though he is said to rest on the seventh day, yet not on account of fatigue; but to denote he had finished his work, brought it to perfection, and ceased from it. And now, to what can all this be ascribed but to omnipotence? Which,

2. Appears in the sustaining and support of all creatures, in the provision made for them, with other wonderful works done in providence: all creatures live, move, and have their being in God; as they are made by him, they consist by him; "he upholds all things by the word of his power"; the heavens, the earth, and

the pillars thereof, (Acts 17:28; Col. 1:16,17; Heb. 1:3; Ps. 75:3) which none but an almighty arm can do: and the manner in which the world, and all things in it, are preserved, and continue, is amazing and surprising, and cannot be accounted for, no other way than by the attribute of omnipotence; for "he stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing; he bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under him"; though these are no other than condensed air, which carry such burdens in them, and yet are not burst by them- he has "shut up the sea with doors"; with clifts and rocks, and even with so weak a thing as sand; "and said, hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed--and has caused the dayspring to know its place-divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, and a way for the lightning of thunder, to cause it to rain on the earth"; which none of the vanities of the Gentiles can do; he gives that "and fruitful seasons, filling mens' hearts with food and gladness", and provides for all the fowls of the air, and "the cattle on a thousand hills"; (see Job 26:7, 8, 38:10-12, 25, 26; Acts 14:17). But what hand can do all these but an almighty one? To which may be added, those wonderful events in providence, which can only be accounted for by recurring to omnipotence, and to supernatural power and aid; as the drowning of the whole world; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain; the strange exploits of some particular persons, as Jonathan and David; the amazing victories obtained by a few over a multitude, sometimes by unarmed men, sometimes without fighting, and always by him that helps, whether with many, or with them that have no power, as the cases of Gideon, Jehoshaphat, and Asa show; with various other things too numerous to mention, as the removing of mountains, shaking the earth, and the pillars of it, commanding the sun not to rise, and sealing up the stars, (Job 9:5-7 etc.

3. The omnipotence of God may be seen in the redemption of men by Christ, in things leading to it, and in the completion of it: in the incarnation of Christ, and his birth of a virgin, which the angel ascribes to "the power of the Highest", the most high God, with whom "nothing is impossible", (Luke 1:35, 37) and which was an expedient found out by infinite wisdom, to remove a difficulty which none but omnipotence could surmount, namely, to bring "a clean thing out of an unclean"; for it was necessary that the Saviour of men should be man, that the salvation should be wrought out in human nature, that so men might have the benefit of it; and it was necessary that he should be free from sin, who became a sacrifice for it; yet how it could be, since all human nature was defiled with sin, was the difficulty; which was got over, through omnipotence forming the human nature of Christ in the above manner: and which was also evident in the protection of him from the womb; in his infancy, from the malice of Herod; after his baptism, from the violence of Satan's temptations, who put him upon destroying himself; and from the wild beasts of the wilderness; and from all the snares and attempts of the Scribes and Pharisees, to take away his life before his time: and in the miraculous works wrought by him, which were proofs of his Messiahship; such as causing the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, and cleansing lepers, and even raising the dead to life; and which were such instances of omnipotence, as caused in those that saw them amazement at the mighty power of God, (Matthew 11:5; Luke 9:43) and more especially this might be seen in making Christ, the man of God's right hand, strong for himself; in strengthening him in his human nature to work out salvation, which neither men nor angels could have done, by fulfilling the law, and satisfying justice; in upholding him under the weight of sins and sufferings; in enabling him to bear the wrath of God, and the curses of a righteous law, and to grapple with all the powers of darkness, and to spoil them, and make a triumph over them; and in raising him from the dead for justification; without which salvation would not have been complete; and in which "the exceeding greatness of" the divine "power" was exerted; and whereby Christ was declared to be the Son of God "with power" (Eph. 1:19; Rom. 1:4).

4. Almighty power may be discerned in the conversion of sinners; that is a creation, which is an act of omnipotence, as has been proved. Men, in conversion, are made new creatures; "created in Christ, and after the image of God"; have new hearts and spirits, clean and upright ones, created in them; new principles of grace and holiness formed in them;

"are turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God; and are made willing in the day of God's power" upon them, to be saved by Christ, and serve him; to submit to his righteousness, and to part with their sins and sinful companions: all which are effects of the exceeding greatness of the power of God towards them and upon them: they are quickened when dead in sins, and raised by Christ the resurrection and the life, from a death of sin to a life of grace; the Spirit of life enters into them, and these dry bones live; conversion is a resurrection, and that requires almighty power. And if we consider the means of it, generally speaking, "the foolishness of preaching", the gospel put into earthen vessels, for this end, "that the excellency of the power of God may appear to be of God", and not of men; and when these means are effectual, they are "the power of God unto salvation" (2 Cor. 4:7; Rom. 1:16). And also the great opposition made to this work, through the enmity and lusts of mens' hearts, the malice of Satan, willing to keep possession; the snares of the world, and the influence of wicked companions; it cannot be thought to be any thing short of the omnipotent hand of God, that snatches men, as brands, out of the burning: and the same power that is put forth in the beginning of the work of grace, is requisite to the carrying of it on; the rise, progress, and finishing of it, are not by might and power of men, but by the mighty, efficacious, and all-powerful grace of God (2 Thess. 1:11; Zech. 4:6).

5. That the Lord God is omnipotent, may be evinced from the rise and progress of Christianity, the success of the gospel, in the first times of it, and the continuance of it, notwithstanding the opposition of men and devils. The interest of Christ in the world rose from small beginnings; it was like the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth; and this by means of the preaching of the gospel; and that by such, who, for the most part, were men illiterate, mean, and contemptible, the foolish things of this world; and who were opposed by Jewish "rabbins", and heathen philosophers, by monarchs, kings, and emperors, and by the whole world; yet these went forth, and Christ with them, conquering and to conquer, and were made to triumph in him over all their enemies everywhere; so that in a short time the universal monarchy of the earth, the whole Roman empire, became nominally Christian; and the Gospel has lived through all the persecutions of Rome pagan and papal, and still continues, notwithstanding the craft of false teachers, and the force of furious persecutors; and will remain and be the everlasting Gospel; all which is owing to the mighty power of God.

6. The final perseverance of every particular believer in grace and holiness, is a proof of the divine omnipotence; it is because he is great in power that not one of them fails; otherwise their indwelling sins and corruptions would prevail over them; Satan's temptations be too powerful for them; and the snares of the world, the flatteries of it, would draw them aside; but they are "kept by the power of God", the mighty power of God, as in a garrison, "through faith unto salvation" (1 Peter 1:5).

7. The almighty power of God will be displayed in the resurrection of the dead; which considered, it need not be thought incredible; though otherwise it might; for what but the all-commanding voice of the almighty God can rouse the dead, and raise them to life, and bring them out of their graves; "some to the resurrection of life, and some to the resurrection of damnation?" What else but his almighty power can gather all nations before him, and oblige them to stand at the judgment seat of Christ, to receive each of their sentences? And what but his vengeful arm of omnipotence can execute the sentence on millions and millions of devils and wicked men, in all the height of wrath, rage, fury, and rebellion? (see Phil. 3:21; John 5:28, 29; Matthew 25:32-46; Rev. 20:8-10).

Chapter 9

OF THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD

Having considered such attributes of God, which belong to him as an active and operative Spirit; as the Life of God, and his Power, or Omnipotence; I proceed to consider such perfections, which may be ascribed to him as an intelligent Spirit; to which, rational spirits, endowed with understanding, will, and affections, bear some similarity. God is said to have a "mind" and "understanding", (Rom. 11:34; Isa. 40:28) to which may be referred, the attributes of "knowledge" and "wisdom", which go together, (Rom.

11:33. 1 shall begin with the first of these. And,

1. Prove that knowledge belongs to God, which is objected to, and called in question, by impious and atheistical persons, (Ps. 73:11) particularly with respect to human affairs; the grounds of which doubts about it, and objections to it, seem to arise, partly from the supposed distance of God in heaven, from men on earth, and partly from the thick and dark clouds which intervene between them, (Job 22:12-14) and which are easily answered by observing the omnipresence of God, or his presence in all places; and that the darkness hides not anything from his all-piercing, all- penetrating eye, the darkness and the light being alike to him (Ps. 139:7-12; Jer. 23:23, 24). Let it be further observed, that in all rational creatures there is knowledge; there is much in angels, and so there was in man, before the fall, both of natural, divine, and civil things; and since the fall there is a remainder of it, notwithstanding the loss sustained by it; and there is more, especially divine and spiritual knowledge, in regenerate men, who are renewed in knowledge. Now if there is knowledge in any of the creatures of God, then much more in God himself.

Besides, all that knowledge that is in angels or men, comes from God; he is a "God of knowledge", or "knowledges", of all knowledge, (1 Sam. 2:3) the source and fountain of it, and therefore it must be in him in its perfection: knowledge of all things, natural, civil, and spiritual, is from him, is taught and given by him; wherefore strong is the reasoning of the Psalmist, "He that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not know?" (Ps. 94:10). His knowledge may be inferred from his will, and the actings of it; that he has a will is most certain, and works all things after the counsel of his will, which cannot be resisted, (Eph. 1:11; Rom. 9:19) and this can never be supposed to be without knowledge; it is generally said and believed of the will of man, that it is determined by the last act of the understanding; and it cannot be imagined that God wills anything ignorantly and rashly; he must know what he wills and nills, and to whom he wills anything, or refuses, (Rom. 9:15, 18) and it appears from all his works, from the works of creation, the heavens, earth, and sea, and all in them; which are ascribed to his wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, and could never be made without them, (Prov. 3:19, 20) the government of the world, and the judgment of the last day, suppose and require the same (Rom. 11:33; 1 Cor. 4:5). Without knowedge God would not be perfectly happy; the blessed one, and blessed for ever, as he is. It is knowledge that gives men the preference to the brute creation, and makes them happier than they, (Job 35:11) and the spiritual knowledge which good men have, gives them a superior excellency and felicity to bad men; and their happiness in a future state will lie, as in perfect holiness, so in perfect knowledge, or "to know", as they "are known", (1 Cor. 13:12). In short, without knowledge, God would be no other than the idols of the Gentiles, who have eyes, but see not; are the work of errors, and are falsehood and vanity; but the portion of Jacob is not like them (Jer. 10:14-16). I go on,

2. To show the extent of the knowledge of God; it reaches to all things, (John 21:17; 1 John 3:20) and is therefore with great propriety called "omniscience", and which the very heathens ascribe to God; and extend it to thoughts. Thales being asked, Whether a man doing ill, could lie hid to, or be concealed from God? answered, No, nor thinking neither. And Pindar says, If a man hopes that anything will be concealed from God, he is deceived.

(1). God knows himself, his nature and perfections: somewhat of this is known by creatures themselves, even by the very heathens, through the light of nature, and in the glass of the creatures, wherein God has showed it to them; even his invisible things, his eternal power and Godhead, (Rom. 1:19, 20) and which are more clearly displayed in Christ, and redemption by him; and more evidently seen by those who are favoured with a divine revelation: and if creatures know something of God, though imperfectly, then he must know himself in the most perfect manner: and rational creatures are endowed with knowledge of themselves, of their nature, and what belongs to them, as angels may reasonably be supposed to be; since even men, in their fallen and imperfect state, know something of themselves, of the constitution, temperament, and texture of their bodies, and of the powers and faculties of their souls; what is in them, in the inmost recesses of their minds, their thoughts, purposes, and intentions (1 Cor. 2:11). "Nosce teipsum, Know thyself", has been reckoned a wise maxim with philosophers, and the

first step to wisdom and knowledge; and good men, illuminated by the Spirit of God, attain to the highest degree of it; and if creatures know themselves in any degree, infinitely much more must the Creator of all know himself. God knows himself in all his persons, and each person fully knows one another; the Father knows the Son, begotten by him, and brought up with him; the Son knows the Father, in whose bosom he lay; and the Spirit knows the Father and Son, whose Spirit he is, and from whom he proceeds; and the Father and Son know the Spirit, who is sent by them as the Comforter (see Matthew 11:27; 1 Cor. 2:10,11). God knows the mode of each person's subsistence in the Deity, the paternity of the Father, the generation of the Son, and the spiration of the Holy Ghost; that these three are one, and one in three; three persons, but one God; which is a mystery incomprehensible by us; but inasmuch as God, who knows his own nature best, has so declared it to be, it becomes us to yield the obedience of faith unto it: he knows his own thoughts, which are the deep things of God, and as much above us as the heavens are above the earth, and as much out of our reach; but he knows them, (Jer. 29:11) that is, his decrees, purposes, and designs, as he needs must, since they are purposed in himself; he knows the things he has purposed, and the exact time of the accomplishment of them, which he has reserved in his own power (Eph. 1:11; Eccl. 3:1; Acts 1:7).

(2). God knows all his creatures, there is not any creature, not one excepted, "that is not manifest in his sight" (Heb 4:13). Known unto him are all his works; all that his hand has wrought, (Acts 15:18) when he had finished his works of creation, "he saw everything that he had made", looked over it and considered it, and pronounced it good, (Gen. 1:31) and his eye sees all things in their present state and condition; he knows all things "inanimate", all that is upon the earth, herbs, grass, trees, &c. and all in the bowels of it, metals and minerals; all that are in the heavens, not only the two great luminaries, the sun and moon, their nature, motion, rising, and setting, with everything belonging to them, but the stars innumerable; he "bringeth out their host by number", or them as a mighty army, and numerous; and yet, as numerous as they are, "he calleth them all by names"; such a distinct and particular knowledge has he of them, and that because he "hath created" them; and he upholds them in being, "by the greatness of his might", so that "not one faileth", (Isa. 40:26) he knows all the "irrational" creatures, the beasts of the field, "the cattle on a thousand hills"; "I know", says he, "all the fowls of the mountains", (Ps. 50:10, 11) as worthless a bird as the sparrow is, "not one of them falls" on the ground without the knowledge and will of God, (Matthew 10:29) he knows all the fishes of the sea, and provided one to swallow Jonah, when thrown into it; and which, at his order, cast him on dry land again (Jonah 1:17, 2:10). And if Adam had such knowledge of all creatures, as to give them proper and suitable names, (Gen. 2:19, 20) and Solomon, a fallen son of his, could "speak of trees, from the cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop that springs out of the wall"; and "of beasts, fowl, creeping things, and fishes", (1 King 4:33) even of their nature, properties, use, and end; can it be thought incredible that God, the Creator of them, should have a distinct and perfect knowledge of all these? he knows all "rational" beings, as angels and men; the angels, though innumerable, being his creatures, standing before him, beholding his face, and sent forth by him as ministring spirits: the elect angels, whom he must know, since he has chosen them and put them under Christ, the head of all principality and power; and confirmed them, by his grace, in their happy state; and who stand on his righthand and left, hearkening to his voice, and ready to obey his will; and are employed by him in providential affairs, and in things respecting the heirs of salvation. Yea, the apostate angels, devils, are known by him, and are laid up in chains of darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day, and are under the continual eye of God, and the restraints of his providence: the questions put to these by God, (Job 1:7) and by Christ, (Mark 5:9) do not imply any kind of ignorance of them; the one is put to lead on to a discourse concerning Job, and the other to show the greatness of the miracle wrought in casting them out. God knows all men, good and bad, all the sons of men, the inhabitants of the earth, wherever they are, in all places and in all ages, (Ps. 33:14; Prov. 15:3) he knows their hearts, for he has fashioned them alike, and is often said to be the searcher of them; he knows the thoughts of the heart; as his word, so is he a "discerner" of them, (Heb 4:12; Ps. 139:2) which is

peculiar to God, and a strong proof of the Deity of Christ, the essential Word, (Matthew 9:4; John 2:24, 25; Heb 4:12, 13) the evil thoughts of men, which are many and vain, (Ps. 94:11) and the good thoughts of men, as he must, since they are of him, and not of themselves; and he takes such notice of them, as to write a book of remembrance of them, (2 Cor. 3:5; Mai. 3:16) he knows the imaginations of the thoughts of the heart, the first motions to thought, whether good or bad, (Gen. 6:5; 1 Chron. 28:9) he knows all the words of men, there is not one upon their tongues, or uttered by them, but he knows it altogether, (Ps. 139:4) the words of wicked men, even every idle word, which must be accounted for in the day of judgment; and much more their blasphemies, oaths, and curses; and all their hard speeches spoken against Christ and his people (Matthew 12:36; Jude 1:15). And the words of good men, expressed in prayer and thanksgiving, and in spiritual conversation with one another (Mai. 3:16). And all the works and ways of men, (Job 34:21) their civil ones, their downsitting and uprising, going forth and coming in, (Ps. 139:2, 3, 121:3, 8) and all their sinful ways and works, which will all be brought into judgment, and for which an account must be given at the bar of God, (Eccl. 12:14; 2 Cor. 5:10) as well as all the good works of God's people, who knows from what principles they spring, in what manner they are done, and with what views, and for what ends (Rev. 2:2, 19).

(3). God knows all things whatever, as well as himself and the creatures: he knows all things possible to be done, though they are not, nor never will be done; such as have been observed under the preceding attribute; and this knowledge is what is called by the schoolmen, "Knowledge of simple intelligence" of things that are not actually done. He knows what "might" be, and in course, "would" be, should he not prevent them by the interposition of his power and providence, and which he determines to do: so he knew the wickedness and treachery of the men of Keilah to David, and that if he stayed there, they would deliver him up into the hands of Saul, and therefore gave him notice of it, that he might make his escape from them, and so prevent their giving him up, acccording to his determinate will (1 Sam. 23:11, 12). God knows the wickedness of some mens' hearts, that they would be guilty of the most shocking crimes, and that without number, if suffered to live, and therefore he takes them away by death; and that such is the temper of some, that if they had a large share of riches, they would be so haughty and overbearing, there would be no living by them; and that even some good men, if they had them, would be tempted to abuse them, to their own hurt, and therefore he gives them poverty. Moreover, God knows all things that have been, are, or shall be; and which the schools call, "knowledge of vision"; an intuitive view of all actual things; things past, present, and to come; so called, not with respect to God, with whom nothing is past nor future, but all present; but with respect to us, and our measures of time. He knows all former things, from the beginning of the world; and which is a proof of Deity, and such a proof that the idols of the Gentiles cannot give, nor any for them, (Isa. 41:22, 43:9) all past transactions at the creation, the fall of Adam, and what followed on that; the original of nations, and their settlement in the world; with various other occurrences to be met with only in the Bible, inspired by God; which, as it is the most ancient, so the truest and best history in the world: nothing that has been can escape the knowledge of God, nor slip out of his mind and memory; oblivion cannot be ascribed to him; could he forget past facts, or they be lost to him, how could everything, open or secret, be brought into account, at the day of judgment, as it will? (Eccl. 12:14). Forgetting the sins of his people, and remembering them no more, are attributed to him after the manner of men; who, when they forgive one another, do, or should, forget offences. God sees and knows all things present; all are naked and open to him, he sees all in one view; all that is done everywhere; as he must, since he is present in all places; and all live, and move, and have their being in him. He knows all things future, all that will be, because he has determined they shall be; it is his will that gives futurition to them, and therefore he must certainly know what he wills shall be: and this is another proof of Deity wanting in heathen idols (Isa. 41:22, 23, 44:7, 46:10). And this is what is called:

"Prescience" or "Foreknowledge"; and of which Tertullian, many hundreds of years ago, observed, that there were as many witnesses of it as there are prophets; and I may add, as there are prophecies;

for all prophecy is founded on God's foreknowledge and predetermination of things; and of this there are numerous instances; as of the Israelites being in a strange land four hundred years, and then coming out with great substance, (Gen. 15:13, 14) of their seventy years captivity in Babylon, and deliverance from thence at the end of that time, (Jer. 29:10) with many other things relating to that people, and other nations; the prophecies of Daniel, concerning the four monarchies; the predictions of the Old Testament, concerning the incarnation of Christ, his sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, and session at God's right hand. And what is the book of the Revelation but a prophecy, and so a proof of God's foreknowledge of future events, which should be in the church and world, from the times of Christ to the end of the world? and this prescience, or foreknowledge of God, is not only of the effects of necessary causes, which necessarily will be, unless prevented by something extraordinary; and of which men themselves may have knowledge; as that things ponderous will fall downwards, and light things move upwards; and that fire put to combustible matter will burn; but of things contingent, which, as to their nature, may or may not be, and which even depend upon the wills of men; and which, with respect to second causes, are hap and chance. Indeed, with respect to God, there is nothing casual or contingent; nothing comes to pass but what is decreed by him, what he has determined either to do himself, or by others, or suffer to be done, (Lam. 3:37, 38) that which is chance to others is none to him; what more a chance matter than a lot? yet though that is cast into the lap, and it is casual to men, how it will turn up, "the whole disposing of it is of the Lord" (Prov. 16:33). What more contingent than the imaginations, thoughts, and designs of men, what they will be? and yet these are foreknown before conceived in the mind, (Deut. 31:21; Ps. 139:2) or than the voluntary actions of men, yet these are foreknown and foretold by the Lord, long before they are done; as the names of persons given them, and what should be done by them; as of Josiah, that he should offer the priests, and burn the bones of men on the altar at Bethel, (see 1 King 13:2; 2 King 23:15, 16) and of Cyrus, that he should give orders for the building of the temple, and city of Jerusalem; and let the captive Jews go free without price, (Isa. 44:28, 45:13; Ezra 1:1-3) all which were predicted of these persons by name, some hundreds of years before they were born: how all this is reconcileable with the liberty of man's will, is a difficulty; and therefore objected to the certain foreknowledge and decree of God; but whether this difficulty can be removed, or no, the thing is not less certain: let it be observed, that God's decrees do not at all infringe the liberty of the will, nor do they put anything in it, nor lay any force upon it; they only imply a necessity of the event, but not of coaction, or force on the will; nor do men feel any such force upon them; they act as freely, and with the full consent of their will, whether good men or bad men, in what they do, as if there were no foreknowledge and determination of them by God; good men willingly do what they do, under the influence of grace, though foreordained to it by the Lord, (Eph. 2:10 Phil. 2:13 and so do wicked men; as Judas in betraying Christ, and the Jews in crucifying him; though both were "according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23). There is another sort of "prescience", or "foreknowledge", the Scriptures speak of; on which the election of persons to eternal life is founded, and according to which it is, (Rom. 8:30; 1 Peter 1:2) which is not a foreknowledge of faith, holiness, and good works, and perseverance therein, as causes of it; for these are effects and fruits of election, which flow from it; no bare foreknowledge of persons, but as joined with love and affection to the objects of it; and which is not general, but special; "The Lord knows them that are his", (2 Tim. 2:19) not in general, as he knows all men; but distinctly, and particularly, he loves them, approves of them, and delights in them, and takes a particular care of them; while of others he says, "I know you not", (Matthew 7:23) that is, as his beloved and chosen ones. But as this belongs to the doctrine of predestination, I shall defer it to its proper place.

3. Though enough has been said to prove the omniscience of God, by the enumeration of the above things; yet this may receive further proof from the several attributes of God: as from his "infinity"; God is infinite; he is unlimited and unbounded as to space, and so omnipresent; he is unbounded as to time, and so eternal; and he is unbounded as to power, and so omnipotent; and he is unbounded as to knowledge,

and so omniscient; there is no searching, no coming to the end of his understanding. From his eternity; he is from everlasting to everlasting, and therefore must know everything that has been, is, or shall be. Men are but of yesterday, and therefore, comparatively, know nothing; "ars longa, vita brevis"; science is of a large extent, and man's life but short, and he can gain but little of it.

Likewise from the "omnipresence" of God; he is every where, in heaven, earth, and hell; and therefore must know every creature, and everything that is done there, (Ps.139:7-12) and it may be observed, that what is said there of this attribute, follows upon an account of the onmiscience of God, and serves to confirm it: it may be argued from the "perfection" of God; if any thing was wanting in his knowledge, neither that, nor he himself, would be perfect. If the circuit of the sun is from one end of the heaven to the other, and nothing is hid on earth from its light and heat; and hence the heathens represent it as seeing all things; then much more may be said of God, who is a sun, that "he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven" (see Ps. 19:6; Job 28:24). From each of the works of God his omniscience may be inferred; he has made all things, and therefore must perfectly know them; every artificer knows his own work, its nature, composition, parts, use, and end. God upholds all things, and is present with them, and therefore must have knowledge of them; he governs the world, orders, directs, and disposes of all things in it; provides for all his creatures; feeds them, and gives them their portion of meat in due season; and therefore must know them all: all the deeds of men, good and evil, public and private, will be all brought into judgment by him; which to do, requires onmiscience (see Eccl. 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:5; Rev. 2:23).

4. The manner in which God knows all things, is incomprehensible by us; we can say but little of it, "such knowledge is too wonderful for us", (Ps. 139:6) we can better say in what manner he does not know, than in what he does: he does not know things by revelation, by instruction, and comnmnication from another; or any way by which men come at the knowledge of things from others; for "shall any teach God knowledge?" or "who has taught him?" (Job 21:22; Isa. 40:13, 14) all things were known to God from eternity, when there were none in being to inform him of anything: besides, to suppose this, is not only contrary to his eternity but to his independency; for this would make him beholden to, and dependent on another, for his knowledge; whereas "all things are of him, for him, and through him". Nor is his knowledge attained by reasoning, discoursing, and inferring one thing from another, as man's is; who not only apprehends simple ideas, but joins and compounds them, and infers other things from them; but then this implies some degree of prior ignorance; or at best, imperfect knowledge, till the premises are clear, and the conclusion formed; which is not to be said of God: and this method of knowledge would be contrary to the simplicity of his nature, which admits of no composition, as well as to his perfection: nor does he know things by succession, one after another; for then it could not be said, that "all things are naked and open to him"; only some at one time, and some at another; which would also argue ignorance of some things, in one instant and another; and imperfection of knowledge; and would be contrary to his immutability, since every accession of knowledge would make an alteration in him; whereas with him "there is no variableness"; he sees and knows all things at once and, together, in one eternal view. In a word, he knows all things in himself, in his own essence and nature; he knows all things possible in his power, and all that he wills to do in his will, and all creatures in himself, as the first cause of them; in whose vast and eternal mind are all the original ideas of them; so that the knowledge of God is essential to him, it is his nature and essence, and therefore is incommunicable to a creature, and even to the human nature of Christ; which, though united to a divine person that is omniscient, yet does not thereby become omniscient; and though the human soul of Christ may know more than the soul of any man, yet not everything; (see Mark 13:32). The knowledge of God is also infinite, (Ps. 147:5) he knows himself, that is infinite; which he could not, unless his knowledge was infinite; for it is impossible, as a Jewish writer observes, that he should know what is perfectly infinite, if his knowledge was not perfectly infinite; for what is finite, can never comprehend that which is infinite; and he knows all things "ad infinitum"; there is no searching of his knowledge; it is perfect,

and nothing can be added to it, (Job 36:4 and it is not conjectural, but certain, depending on his will; he knew from all eternity, most certainly, that all things would be, that are, because he determined they should be; and his will cannot be frustrated, nor his power resisted (Job 42:2).

Chapter 10

OF THE WISDOM OF GOD

The next attribute of God, which requires our attention, is, the Wisdom of God, which belongs to him as an intelligent Spirit; and is a more comprehensive attribute than that of knowledge; for it not only supposes that, but directs and uses it, in the best manner, and to the best ends and purposes; as well as his power and goodness. I shall,

1. Prove that wisdom is a perfection in God, and is in him in its utmost perfection; it is consummate and infinite wisdom he is possessed of. No one that believes the being of a God, can admit the least doubt of it. An unwise Being cannot be God. No man is wise, says Pythagoras, but God only. That "with him is wisdom", is frequently asserted in the sacred scriptures, (Job 12:12, 13; Dan. 2:20, 21). And, indeed, if this is, and is expected to be with ancient men, who have lived long, and have had a large experience of things; then much more, infinitely more, may it be thought to be with him, who is "the ancient of days", and from everlasting to everlasting God. He is no less than three times said to be "the only wise God" (Rom. 16:27; 1 Tim. 1:17; Jude 1:25). Not to the exclusion of his Son, who is called "wisdoms", plurally, because of the infinite fulness of wisdom that dwells in him, (Prov. 1:20) nor of the Spirit, who is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him, (Eph. 1:17) but with respect to creatures, who have no wisdom, in comparison of him; the angels, those knowing and wise beings, when compared with him, are chargeable with "folly", (Job 4:18) and as for "man, though he would be wise, he is born like a wild ass's colt"; and has very little wisdom in things civil, none in things spiritual; and though he is wise to do evil, to do good he has no knowledge. God is "all-wise"; he has all wisdom in him; there is no defect of it in him; there is nothing of it wanting in him, with respect to anything whatever. Men may be wise in some things, and not in others; but he is wise in everything; "nemo sapit omnibus horis"; no man is wise at all times; the wisest of men sometimes say a foolish word, and do a foolish thing: but God, neither in his word, nor in any of his works, can be charged with folly; not an unwise saying appears in all the scriptures; nor an unwise action in any of his works; "How manifold are thy works, O Lord, in wisdom hast thou made them all!" (Ps. 104:24). God is essentially wise; there is the personal wisdom of God, which is Christ; who is often spoken of as wisdom, and as the wisdom of God; (see Prov. 8:12-31; 1 Cor. 1:24) and there is his essential wisdom, the attribute now under consideration; which is no other than the nature and essence of God; it is himself; as he is love itself, and goodness itself, so he is wisdom itself; his wisdom cannot be separated from his essence; this would be contrary to his simplicity, and he would not be that simple and uncompounded Spirit he has been proved to be. God is wisdom "efficiently"; he is the source and fountain of it, the God and giver of it; all that is in the angels of heaven comes from him; all that Adam had, or any of his sons; or was in Solomon, the wisest of men; or is in the politicians and philosophers of every age; or in every mechanic; or appears in every art and science; all is the gift of God; and particularly, the highest and best of wisdom, spiritual wisdom, wisdom in the hidden part, the fear of God in the soul of man, is what God puts there; wherefore, as he that teacheth man knowledge, must have knowledge himself; so he that gives wisdom to the wise, must have infinite wisdom himself; for such is the wisdom of God, it is unsearchable; there is no tracing it; it has a (3a0oc;, "a depth", which is unfathomable, (Rom. 11:33; Job 11:6-9, 28:12-23) yet; though it cannot be traced out to the full, or be found out to perfection, there are some shining appearances and striking instances of it; which clearly and plainly prove that wisdom, in its utmost extent, is with him. And which,

2. Will be next observed. And,

First, The wisdom of God appears in his purposes and decrees, and which are therefore called his counsels, (Isa. 25:1) not that they are the effects of consultation with himself or others; but because such resolutions and determinations with men are generally the wisest, which are formed on close thought, on mature deliberation, and on consultation

with themselves and others. Hence the decrees of God, which are at once fixed with the highest wisdom, are called counsels; though his counsels are without consultation, and his determinations without deliberation; of which he has no need. As he sees in his understanding, what is fittest to be done, his wisdom directs his will to determine, at once, what shall be done; and this is seen in appointing the end for which they are to be, in ordaining means suitable and conducive to that end; and in pitching upon the most proper time for execution; and in guarding against every thing that may hinder that. The end for which God has appointed all that has been, or shall be, is himself, his own glory, the best end that can be proposed; "the Lord hath made", that is, appointed "all things for himself"; for the glorifying of himself, one or other of the perfections of his nature; for as all things are of him, as the efficient cause; and are through him, as the wise orderer and disposer of them; so they are to him, as the final cause, or last end of them, his own glory (Prov. 16:4; Rom. 11:36). The means he fixes on to bring it about, are either extraordinary or ordinary; which latter are second causes dependmg upon him, the first Cause, and which are linked together, and under his direction and influence most certainly attain the end; see (Hosea 2:21, 22) and which is effected in the most seasonable time; for as there is a purpose for everything done under the heavens, there is a time fixed for every purpose; and as the times and seasons are in the power of God, and at his disposal, he pitches upon that which is the most suitable; for he makes everything beautiful in his time, (Eccl. 3:1, 11; Acts 1:7) and being the onmiscient God, he foresees all future events, the end from the beginning; so that nothing unforeseen by him can occur to hinder the execution of his purposes; wherefore his "counsel shall stand", and he "will do all his pleasure", (Isa. 46:10) and though there may be many devices formed to counterwork his designs, they are all in vain; there is no wisdom nor counsel against the Lord; he disappoints the devices of the crafty, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong; so that his counsel always stands; and the thoughts of his heart, which are his decrees, are to all generations. All this is true of the decrees of God in general. And if the princes of this world, under a divine direction, form wise counsels, and make wise and righteous decrees; with what greater, with what consummate wisdom, must the counsels and decrees of God himself be made; concerning which the apostle breaks forth into this exclamation, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God?" (Rom. 11:33) for he is there treating of the decrees of God, and particularly of the decree of election: and in which the wisdom of God appears, both in the end and means, and in the persons he has chosen: his end is the praise of his own grace, or the glorifying of his sovereign grace and mercy in the salvation of men, (Rom. 9:23; Eph. 1:5, 6) to show the sovereignty of it, he passed this decree without any respect to the works of men, and before either good or evil were done; and to show that he is no respecter of persons, he chose some out of every nation, Jews and Gentiles; and to show the freeness of his grace, he chose the foolish and weak things of this world, and things that are not; that no flesh should glory in his presence: and as he chose those persons to be holy, and to bring them to a state of holiness and happiness, and in a way consistent with his justice; he has pitched upon means the wisest that could be devised, even "sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus", the righteousness and death of Christ (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). So that this decree stands firm and stable; not on the ground of mens' works, but upon the will of God; the election always obtains, or its end is answered: those that are ordained to eternal life most surely believe; and they that are predestinated to it, are most certainly "called, justified and glorified" (Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:30). The subordinate end of election, is the salvation of the elect; that is what they are appointed to, (1 Thess. 5:9) the scheme and plan of which salvation is so wisely formed, that it is called the "manifold wisdom of God", in which there are various displays of it, (Eph. 3:10) and particularly, "the counsel of peace", which was between the Father and the Son, (Zech. 6:13) for "God was in Christ reconciling the world of his elect unto himself", planning the scheme of their peace and reconciliation; not imputing their trespasses unto them; for then no reconciliation could have been made; but to Christ, by whom atonement is made, and so salvation effected. But of the wisdom of God, in this decree of salvation, with respect to the

Author, subjects, time, and manner, more hereafter, under another head. Moreover, the decree of God, respecting the leaving, passing by, and rejection of others, and punishing them for their sins, his end in which being for the glorifying of his justice in their condemnation, is without any imputation either of unrighteousness or folly; for "what if God, willing to show his wrath", his indignation against sin, and "to make his power known", in taking vengeance on sinners, "endured with much longsuffering", their sinful course of life with much patience; even "the vessels of wrath", justly deserving of it, "fitted for destruction" by their own sins, he appointed them to it (Rom. 9:22). What charge of injustice or folly can be brought against him? Yea, even such decrees of God as are about the sinful actions of men, are not destitute of wisdom, of the highest wisdom.

The sin and fall of Adam, so momentous, and of such consequence as to affect all mankind, could never have been without the knowledge and will of God; he could have prevented it if he would; but he left, as he decreed to leave, man to the mutability of his will; the consequence of which was his fall: and, as he designed, so in his infinite wisdom, he has overruled this greatest of all evils; the source of all that has been in the world since, for the greatest good, the salvation of men by Christ; whereby all his perfections are glorified: so the sinful actions of men are, by the permissive will of God, suffered to be, and are sometimes apparently overruled for some important end; as the selling of Joseph into Egypt by his brethren: and especially the crucifixion of Christ by the wicked Jews; both decreed by God. And so wicked men are suffered to commit the grossest sins, as Pharaoh, that God may be glorified in his justice, through inflicting his judgments on them; by the execution of which he is known, and his name celebrated with praise and glory (Ex. 9:16). And likewise the failings and sins of God's people serve for the humbling of them, and the exercise of their graces; and so are overruled for good. But then by this we are not authorised, nor encouraged to do evil, that good may come; God only can overrule it to serve any good purpose.

The wisdom of God is displayed in his secret transactions with Christ in the covenant of grace; it appears in making such a covenant which is "ordered in all things", for his own glory, the glory of the three divine persons, Father, Son, and Spirit; and for the good of his people in time, and for their everlasting happiness, hereafter; being stored with promises and blessings of all sorts, peculiarly suitable for them: in appointing Christ to be the Mediator and Surety of it, and putting the said promises and blessings into his hands, and also their persons, for safety and security; all which were done in eternity. But,

Secondly, The wisdom of God is more clearly manifested in his visible works in time; "O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all!" (Ps. 104:24). And,

1st. It appears in the works of creation: the making of the heavens and the earth is always ascribed to the wisdom, understanding, and discretion of God (Ps. 136:5; Prov. 3:19, 20; Jer. 10:12). Whole volumes have been written on this subject, the wisdom of God in creation; and more might; the subject is not exhausted. If we look up to the starry heavens, and the luminaries, the work of his fingers, curiously wrought; as what are wrought with the fingers of men usually are; we may observe a wonderful display of divine wisdom; in the sun that rules by day, and in the moon that rules by night, and in the stars also; all which shed their benign influences on the earth: particularly in the sun, the fountain of heat and light; in the situation of it, not so far from the earth as to be of no use to it, nor so near as to hurt it; in its circular motion, either about our earth, or on its own axis, whereby nothing is hid from the heat and light of it, at one time or another; and which performs its revolutions so punctually, and with so much regularity, and so exactly answers the end of its destination, that it seems as if it was wise and knowing itself; "the sun knoweth his going down" (Ps. 104:19). If we descend into the airy region, and could but enter into the treasures of the snow and rain, which God has in reserve there, and wisely distributes on the earth at proper times; how he binds up the water in his thick cloud, and the cloud is not rent with the weight thereof; how he balances and poises these ponderous bodies, that they are not overset, and burst, and fall with their own weight; by which they would wash away cities, towns, and villages, and the fruits of the earth; but causes them to descend in gentle showers, and in small drops; whereby the earth becomes fruitful; we

cannot but observe amazing wisdom.

If we come down to the earth, we may behold, besides men, the innumerable inhabitants of it, placed on it to cultivate it; "the cattle on a thousand hills"; the pastures covered with flocks; the valleys clothed with grain; grass growing for the beasts, and vegetation for the service of man; "wine to make his heart glad; oil to cause his face to shine; and bread that strengthens his heart": and in the bowels of it, metals and minerals of divers sorts, gold, silver, brass, and iron, for artificers that work in each of them; and all for the use, and to increase the wealth of men: the wisdom, as well as the goodness of God, must be discerned. The structure of the bodies of creatures is very wonderfully fitted for their different actions and uses; fishes for swimming, birds for flying, beasts for walking and running; some more slowly, and some more swiftly; but especially the texture of the human body, in all its parts, is very surprising, it being "curiously wrought"; no embroidery, or work with a needle, exceeding it: the organs of the eye are admirably fitted for seeing; the parts of the ear for hearing; the instruments of speech, the tongue, mouth, and lips, for speaking; the hands and arms for working, and feet for walking; as well as all the other parts of the body, framed and disposed for various services; to which may be added, the subserviency of all creatures to one another, and especially to man, for whose sake the world was made, and all things in it; it was designed for an habitation for him, and was made and furnished with every thing for his use and service, for his convenience and pleasure, before he was created; and when he was created, in the image of God, dominion was given him over the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field; the herbage of the earth was provided both for food and medicine; the cattle, some for food, some for clothing, some for transportation, and some for cultivation of the earth; and all were made for the glory of God, as the ultimate end; "for his pleasure they are and were created", (Rev. 4:11) and all his works, in their way, praise him, declare his glory, and show forth his handywork.

Secondly, The wisdom of God appears in the works of providence. It may be observed in the various returning seasons; seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, night and day; which keep their constant revolutions and stated course; scarce anything ever preposterous. Rain is given from heaven, and fruitful seasons. In some of the Eastern countries, as in Canaan, rain fell but twice a year, called the former and latter rain; the one when the seed was sown, to bring it up, the other just before harvest, to fatten the grain; and both constantly fell at their usual and appointed times: and where rain is very scarce, as in Egypt, the river Nile overflows its banks at a certain time of the year; which leaving a slime, makes the earth fruitful, and answers all the purposes of rain. The provision made for all creatures, suitable to their natures, is an abundant proof of the wisdom of God: as it requires wisdom, as well as faithfulness, in a steward, to give to everyone under his care their portion of meat in due season; so the wisdom of God is wonderfully displayed, not only in filling mens' hearts with food and gladness; but in giving to the beasts their food, everyone agreeable to their nature, "and to the young ravens that cry"; in opening his hand of providence and satisfying the desires of all living; in giving largely and liberally, and in a proper time, meat to all whose eyes wait on him; even his vast numerous family of creatures. He has the charge over the earth, and disposes of the whole world, and all things in it; he sits on the circle of the earth, and beholds all that are in it, and that are done in it; he places men in different stations of life, so as to have a dependance upon, and a connection with each other: he wisely governs, rules and overrules all things, for the mutual good of men, and his own glory: he does all things after the counsel of his will, in the wisest and best manner, and to answer the best ends and purposes; he orders the various scenes of prosperity and adversity, and sets the one against the other; so that there is no finding any thing after him, or making them otherwise and better than they are; particularly, he maketh all things work together for the good of his people; for the trial of their grace, and to make them meet for glory; nor is there anyone trial or exercise they meet with, but what there is a necessity of it, and is for the best; yea, there is infinite wisdom in the most intricate providences, and which are now difficult to account for, and to reconcile to the promises and perfections of God; but when the mystery of providence is finished, and the judgments of God are made manifest, and all are seen

in one view, in an harmonious connection together; the wisdom of God, in every part, will appear striking and amazing; as when a man looks on the wrong side of a piece of tapestry, or only views it in detached pieces; he is scarcely able to make anything of it; nor can he discern art and beauty in it; but when it is all put together, and viewed on its right side, the wisdom, the contrivance, and art of the maker are observed with admiration.

Thirdly, The wisdom of God is to be seen in the great work of redemption and salvation by Christ; "herein he hath abound towards us in all wisdom and prudence" (Eph. 1:7, 8). Wisdom and prudence are displayed in other works of God; but in this "all" wisdom and prudence, and that in abundance, and which appear,

1. In settling upon the person to be the Redeemer; not any of the sinful race of men, for they all having sinned, all need a Redeemer; nor can anyone redeem himself, and much less redeem another: nor any of the angels; for whatever goodwill they might bear to such work, none were equal to it; and therefore God put no trust in them, nor committed any such trust unto them; but his own Son, him he appointed and foreordained to be the Redeemer of his chosen people; the middle person in the Trinity, and most proper to be the Mediator; the Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God, and by whom all things were made, and so equal to such an undertaking; the Son of God; and it was more seemly and suitable to his relation and character, as a Son, to be appointed, to be sent, and to obey, than either of the other persons, and particularly the Father; and by having two natures, divine and human, united in one person, the Immanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh, he was the fittest person to be employed in this service; partaking of both natures, he was the only proper person to be the Mediator between God and Man, to be the man to do it, and lay his hand on both, and reconcile those two parties at variance, and to do what respected both, even "things pertaining to God, and to make reconciliation for the sins of the people". Being man, he could have compassion, as he had, on the lost miserable race of men, and in his love and pity redeem them; he was capable of being made under the law, and yielding obedience to it; which, being broken by the sin of men, was necessary to his redemption of them, and of suffering the penalty of the law, death; both which have been done by him, and thereby the law is magnified, and made more honourable, than it could have been by the obedience of all the angels in heaven, or by the sufferings of all the damned in hell; and hereby also satistaction was made for sin, in the same nature that sinned, which seemed necessary, or, however, it was a wise disposition, that so it should be. But what most of all displays the wisdom of God in this affair, is, that since all human nature was depraved and corrupted with sin, how a clean and sinless nature could be produced out of an unclean one, which yet was necessary to making atonement for sin in it; which difficulty infinite wisdom, and almighty power, have surmounted by Christ's birth of a virgin, under the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost; whence what was born of her was the Holy Thing, and so could be, and was offered up, without spot to God. Add to this, that it was not an human person, but an human nature, Christ assumed; it was flesh he took, the seed of Abraham, and is called the Holy Thing, but not a person; it never subsisted of itself, but from the moment of its production was taken into union with the person of the Son of God; which was wisely ordered for our good, and the glory of God; for had it been a distinct person of itself, the actions and sufferings of it would have been finite, and of no benefit to mankind; his righteousness would have been, though pure and spotless, but the righteousness of a creature; and could have been of no use, but to itself: whereas, through the union of the human nature to the person of the Son of God, it became the righteousness of God, and so imputable to many.

Once more, through Christ's being man, he became our near kinsman, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone; and so the right of redemption belonged to him; hence the same word "Goel", in the Hebrew language, signifies both a redeemer and a near kinsman.

But then the person settled upon to be the Redeemer, is God as well as man; and so as he had pity for men as man, he had a zeal for God and his glory, as a divine person; and would be, as he was, concerned for the glorifying all his divine perfections, one as well as another. Being God, he could put an infinite virtue into his actions and sufferings, as man, whereby the

end of them would be sufficiently answered. Hence his righteousness is the righteousness of God, and is unto all, and upon all them that believe; his blood, the blood of the Son of God, which cleanses from all sin; his sacrifice, the sacrifice of his whole human nature, in union with himself, a divine person; and so sufficient to put away sin, by a full satisfaction for it; being God, he could support the human nature, under the weight of all the sins of his people, and of all the wrath and punishment due unto them; which otherwise must have been intolerable. Being the mighty God, he was mighty to save, and his own arm has wrought out salvation. The great God is our Saviour. Now the finding out such a fit person to be the Redeemer of men, is to be ascribed solely to the wisdom of God: had all men been summoned together, and this declared unto them, that God was willing they should be redeemed, could they settle upon a proper person to redeem them; and had the angels been called in to assist with their counsel, after long consultation, they would never have been able to have proposed one fit for this work; for who could have thought of the Son of God, and proposed his becoming man, and suffering, and dying in the stead of men, to redeem them? this is "nodus deo vindice dignus"; what Go only could have found out; and he claims it to himself; "I", the only wise God, "have found a ransom" (Job 33:24; Ps. 89:19, 20).

2c2. The wisdom of God appears in the persons fixed upon to be redeemed; not all men, but some; partly to show the sovereignty of God, in redeeming whom he pleases; and partly, since all had sinned, and were deserving of death, to glorify his grace and mercy in the redemption of some, and his justice in the destruction of others; and in both to show that he could, in right, have destroyed them all, if he pleased; and likewise, that it might appear he was no respecter of persons, he has not limited the grace of redemption to any particular family or nation; but has redeemed some out of every nation, tongue, kindred, and people; and whereas his view therein is to magnify the riches of his grace, in order to show the freeness of it; he sent Christ to die for, and redeem, not the good and the righteous, who appeared so to themselves and others, but ungodly sinners, the worst and chief of sinners (Rom. 5:6-8, 10).

2. The wisdom of God may be observed in the way and manner in which redemption is obtained; which being by the price of the blood of Christ, and in a way of full satisfaction to law and justice; the different claims of mercy and justice, which seemed to clash with one another, are reconciled: mercy insisting that the sinner be pardoned and saved, that it might be glorified; and justice requiring that the law should take place, its sentence be executed, and punishment inflicted, that so the rights and honours of law and justice might be maintained; which, by this happy method wisdom has settled upon, they both agree; "mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other." Sin is condemned in the flesh of Christ, vengeance is taken on it, punishment inflicted for it, and yet the sinner saved from sin, from condemnation, wrath, and ruin. Redemption is also wrought out in a way most mortifying to Satan. Through envy he sought the ruin of men; contrived it, brought it about, and triumphed in it: but what a mortification must it be to that proud spirit, that one of the woman's seed he had ruined, should bruise his head; that the Son of God should be manifested in human nature, to destroy his works, to destroy himself, to spoil his principalities, and redeem mankind; and be exalted in the same nature, to the highest pitch of honour and glory imaginable; to sit at the right hand of God; angels, authorities, principalities, and powers, subject to him!

4. The wisdom of God is to be discerned in the time of man's redemption; which was the most opportune and seasonable; it was in due time; in the fullness of time fixed and agreed upon between the Father and the Son, and must be the fittest; it was after the faith and patience of God's people had been sufficiently tried, even for the space of four thousand years from the first hint of a Redeemer; after the Saviour, and his sacrifice, had been prefigured, by types, shadows, and sacrifices, for so long a time, and the use, end, and efficacy of sacrifices had been sufficiently known, and God would have them no longer; then said Christ, "Lo, I come", &c. when the Gentile world was covered with darkness, blindness, and ignorance, and abounded with all kind of wickedness; when immorality, formality, hypocrisy, and neglect of the word and worship of God among the Jews re vailed; by all which it may be most clearly seen, there was need

of a Saviour and Redeemer; for "who can declare his generation", the wickedness of it? then, in the infinite wisdom of God,

Christ was sent to redeem sinners.

Fourthly, The wisdom of God shines in the Gospel, the good news of salvation by Christ; in its doctrines, and in its ordinances; that itself is called, "the wisdom of God in a mystery; the hidden wisdom; the manifold wisdom of God"; (1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:10) every doctrine is a display of it; to instance only in justification, and the pardon of sin. Justification is by the free grace of God, and yet in strict justice; grace provided Christ to work out a righteousness; grace accepts of it in the room and stead of sinners, and grace imputes it to them: the righteousness of Christ, by which men are justified, is commensurate to the law and justice of God; so that "God is just, while the justifier of him that believes in Jesus": the grace of faith is wisely appointed to receive this righteousness; it is of faith, that it might appear to be of grace, and that pride and boasting might be excluded; which, had any other been appointed, would not have been so apparent; this being a soul humbling, a soul emptying grace, which receives all from God, and gives him all the glory: pardon of sin is of free grace, and yet through the blood of Christ; and is both an act of grace and of justice; God is just and faithful to forgive it, as well as gracious and merciful; he forgives sin, and takes vengeance on the inventions of the sinner: pardon proceeds upon the foot of satisfaction, which grace provides; and so both grace and justice agree in it, and are glorified by it: the ordinances of the Gospel are wisely instituted to answer the end of them; baptism to represent the overwhelming sufferings of Christ, his burial, and resurrection from the dead: the ordinance of the supper, to show forth his death; the bread broken is a proper emblem of his broken body; the wine poured out, of his blood shed, and his soul poured out unto death for sinners. Wisely has God appointed men, and not angels, to minister the word and administer ordinances; "men of the same passions with others"; who may be heard and conversed with, without dread and terror; frail, mortal men, earthen vessels, in which this treasure is put, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men; and a standing ministry is wisely fixed, to be continued to the end of the world, for the use, relief, refreshment, and comfort of God's people, as well as the conversion of sinners; and all for the glory of God.

Fifthly, The wisdom of God may be seen in the government and preservation of the church of God, in all ages; in guiding them by immediate revelation, without the written word, when the church was in a few families, and the lives of men long; then with written laws, statutes, and ordinances, suited to the infant state of the church, among the people of Israel; and now with ordinances, more agreeable to its adult state, under the gospel dispensation, throughout the world: and as it is a church and kingdom not of this world, it is supported, not by worldly, but spiritual means; and wonderfully has it been preserved, in all ages, and increased, amidst all the persecutions of men; no weapon formed against it has prospered; and God has made it, and will still more make it to appear, that he rules in Jacob unto the ends of the earth.

Chapter 11

OF THE WILL OF GOD AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF IT

Having considered the attributes of God which belong to his understanding, as an intelligent Spirit, his knowledge and wisdom, I now proceed to consider his Will, and the sovereignty of it. And shall,

1. Prove that there is a Will in God; for in all intelligent beings there is a will, as well as an understanding; as in angels and men, so in God; as he has an understanding which is infinite and unsearchable; so he has a will, to do what he knows is most fitting to be done. His understanding influences and guides his will, and his will determines all his actions; and his will being thus wisely directed, is called, "the counsel of his will" (Eph. 1:11). A will is frequently ascribed to God in Scripture; "The will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21:14). "Who has resisted his will" (Rom. 9:19). "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will", (Eph. 1:9) and in many other places; the will of God is no other than God himself willing; it is essential to him; it is his nature and essence; it is not to be separated, or to be considered as distinct from it, or as a part of it, of which it is composed; which would be contrary to the simplicity of God; or to his being a simple, uncompounded Spirit; which has been established.

Will is ascribed to each of the divine persons; to the Father, (John 6:39, 40) to the Son, as a divine person, (John 5:21, 17:24) and who also, as man, has a will distinct from that, though subjected to it, (John 6:38; Luke 22:42) and to the Spirit, who is said to forbid, and not to suffer some things to be done; that is, to not allow them; and to not allow is an act of the will, as well as to will, (Acts 16:6, 7) and he is said to divide his gifts to each men, as he "will" (1 Cor. 12:11). And these three, as they are the one God, they agree in one, in one mind and will.

2. I shall next show what the will of God is: there is but one will in God; but for our better understanding it, it may be distinguished. I shall not trouble the reader with all the distinctions of it made by men; some are false, and others vain and useless; such as into absolute and conditional, antecedent and consequent, effectual and ineffectual, &c. the distinction of the "secret" and "revealed" will of God has generally obtained among sound divines; the former is properly the will of God, the latter only a manifestation of it. Whatever God has determined within himself, whether to do himself, or to do by others, or to suffer to be done, while it is in his own breast, and is not made known by any event in providence, or by prophecy, that is his secret will; such are the deep things of God, the thoughts of his heart, the counsels and determinations of his mind; which are impenetrable to others; but when these open, by events in providence, or by prophecy, then they become the revealed will of God. God's secret will becomes revealed by events in providence, whether it be considered general or special; the general providence of God, with respect to the world and church, is no other than the execution, and so the manifestation of his secret will, with respect to both: to the world, its production, the origin of nations, the settlement of them in the various parts of the world; the rise of states and kingdoms, and particularly the four monarchies, and the succession of them: to the church, in the line of Seth, from Adam, and in the line of Shem, from Noah, and in the people of Israel, from Abraham, to the coming of Christ: and the book of Revelation is a discovery of the secret will of God with respect to both, from the coming of Christ to the end of the world; the greatest part of which has been fulfilled, and the rest will be; as the destruction of antichrist, and the antichristian states; the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles; and the spiritual and personal kingdom of Christ. These are now already revealed, though the time when they will take place is still in the secret will of God. The providence of God may be considered as special with respect to particular persons; there is a purpose or secret will of God, with respect to every man; and there is a time fixed for every purpose; a time to be born, and a time to die; and for everything that befalls men between their birth and death: all which open in time, in providence; and what was secret becomes revealed: so we know that we are born, who our parents, the time and circumstances of our birth, as related to us; we know what has befallen us, whether in an adverse or prosperous way; God has performed what is appointed for us, as Job says of himself; but then, as he observes, "many such things are with him", in his secret will. We know not what shall befall us; and though we know that we shall die, that is revealed; but when and where, in what manner and circumstance, we know not; that remains in the secret will of God. Some things which belong to the secret will of God become revealed by prophecy; so it was made known to Abraham, that his seed, according to the secret will or purpose of God, should be in a land, not theirs, four hundred years, and be afflicted, and come out with great substance: nor did God hide from Abraham what he secretly willed to do, in destroying Sodom and Gomorrah: and, indeed, it has been usual for the Lord to do nothing but what he reveals to his servants the prophets; particularly all things concerning Christ, his incarnation, offices, obedience, sufferings, and death, and the glory that should follow, were all signified beforehand, to the prophets, by the Spirit of Christ in them. The will of God, which he would have done by men, is revealed in the law, that is called "his will" (Rom. 2:18). This was made known to Adam, by inscribing it on his heart, whereby he knew his duty to God, to be performed by him; this, though sadly obliterated by sin, yet there are some remains of it in the Gentiles, who do by nature the things contained in it; which show the work of the law written in their hearts: a new edition of this law was delivered to the Israelites, written on tables of stone, by the finger of God; according to

which they were to behave themselves, and hold the tenure of the land of Canaan, and enjoy the privileges of it: and in regeneration the law of God is put into the inward parts, and written on the hearts of God's people; who being transformed, by the renewing of their minds, come to know what is the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God (Rom. 12:2). This respects man's duty both to God and men.

There is the revealed will of God in the Gospel; which respects the kind intentions, and gracious regards of God to men; and discovers what before was his secret will concerning them; as, that he has chosen some to everlasting life and happiness; that he has appointed these to salvation by Christ; and appointed him to be their Saviour; that Christ undertook to do this will of God, and came from heaven to earth to do it, and has finished it; and that it is the will of God that these should be regenerated and sanctified; and "that they should never perish, but have everlasting life" (Eph. 1:4, 5; John 6:38; 1 Thess. 4:3; John 6:39, 40; Matthew 18:14). But then, though all this is the revealed will of God, in the Gospel, yet as to particular persons interested herein, it is, in a great measure, a secret; election of God, and so the rest, may be known by the Gospel coming with power into the heart, and by a work of grace upon it; and the knowledge of it should be sought after; yet it is not attained to but by such who are favoured with a full assurance of faith; and as to others, though it may, in a judgment of charity, because of their declared experiences, their savoury discourses, and holy conversation, be concluded of them, that they are the elect of God, &c. yet it cannot be certainly known, but by divine revelation, as it might be by the apostle, that Clement, and other fellow labourers of his, had their names written in the book of life (Phil. 4:3). It is the revealed will of God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; and that all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that after death there will be a judgment; and though it is revealed, that a day is fixed, as well as a person appointed to judge the world in righteousness; yet "of that day and hour knows no man"; no, not the angels; but God only. So that, on the whole, though there is some foundation for this distinction of the secret and revealed will of God, yet it is not quite clear; there is a mixture, part of the will of God is, as yet, secret, and part of it revealed, with respect to the same subject, as what has been observed plainly shows.

The most accurate distinction of the will of God, is into that of precept and purpose; or the commanding and decreeing will of God.

God's will of precept, or his commanding will, is that which is often spoken of in Scripture; as what should be done by men, and which is desirable they might have knowledge of, and be complete in (Matthew 7:21, 12:50; Col. 1:9, 4:12). This is the rule of mens' duty; which consists of the fear of God, and keeping his commands; this is done but by a few, and by none perfectly; every sin is a transgression of it; when it is done aright it is done in faith, from love, and to the glory of God: every good man desires to do it in the best manner, and, if it could be, perfectly; even as it is done by angels in heaven. God, by the declaration of this his will, shows what he approves of, and what is acceptable to him, when done aright; and is made to render men inexcusable that do it not, and to make it appear right in justice to inflict punishment on such persons.

The decreeing will of God is only, properly speaking, his Will; the other is his Word: this is the rule of his own actions; he does all things in heaven and earth after his will, the counsel of it; and this will is always done, cannot be resisted, frustrated, and made void; he does whatever he wills; "his counsel stands, and the thoughts of his heart are to all generations"; and this is sometimes fulfilled by those who have no regard to his will of precept, and have no knowledge of this, even while they are doing it; as Herod and Pontius Pilate, the Jews and Gentiles, in doing what they did against Christ, (Acts 4:27, 28) and the ten kings, into whose hearts God put it to fulfil his will, in giving their kingdoms to the beast, (Rev. 17:17) and this will of God should be bore in mind in everything we intend to do or go about; saying, if the Lord will, we will do this, and that, and the other, (1 Cor. 4:19; James 4:13-15) and this should be owned and acknowledged, and submitted to in every state and condition of life, whether of prosperity or adversity, or in whatsoever befalls us in our own persons, or in our friends and relations, (Acts 21:14) and this, properly speaking, is the one and only will of God. I shall next inquire,

III. What are the objects of it.

First, God himself, not his Being, perfections, and modes of subsisting; as the paternity of the Father; the generation of the Son; and the breathing of the Spirit. These naturally and necessarily exist, and do not depend upon the will of God: but it is his own glory; "The Lord hath made all things for himself"; that is, for his own glory (Prov. 16:4). He wills his own glory in all he does; as "all things are of him", as the efficient Cause; and "through him", as the wise Disposer of them; so they are "to him", to his glory, as the final Cause, and last end of all; and this he wills necessarily; he cannot but will his own glory; as "he will not give his glory to another"; he cannot will it to another; that would be to deny himself.

Secondly, All things without himself, whether good or evil, are the objects of his will, or what his will is some way or other concerned in: there is a difference, indeed, between the objects of God's knowledge and power and the objects of his will; for though he knows all things knowable, in his understanding, and his power reaches to all that is possible, though not made; yet he wills not all things willable, if the word may be allowed, or that might be willed; wherefore, as Amesius observes, though God is said to be omniscient and omnipotent, yet not omnivolent or all willing.

1st, All good things.

1. All things in nature; all things are made by him, and all were originally good that were made by him, even "very good"; and all were made according to his will; "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure"; or by thy will, "they are and were created", (Rev. 4:11) even the heavens, earth, and sea, and all that in them are.

2. All things in providence. God's kingdom of providence rules over all, and extends to all creatures, angels and men, and every other, and to all events that befall them; not a sparrow falls to the ground without the will of God; "He doth according to his will in the army of heaven"; in the heavenly host of angels; "and among the inhabitants of the earth", (Dan. 4:35) there is nothing comes to pass but what God has willed, ordered, and appointed; "Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?" (Lam. 3:37).

3. All things in grace are according to the will of God, all spiritual blessings in Christ, all grace given to the elect Christ, before the world was; the choice of them in Christ; predestination to adoption by him; redemption through his blood; regeneration, sanctification, and the eternal inheritance; all are according to the good pleasure of his will (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3-5, 7, 9, 11; James 1:18; 1 Thess. 4:3).

Secondly, All evil things are the objects of God's will; which are of two sorts.

1. "Malum poenae", the evil of afflictions; whether in a way of chastisement, or of punishment: if in a way of chastisement, as they are to the people of God, they are according to the will of God; they do not spring out of the dust, nor come by chance; but are by the will, order, and appointment of God; as to quality, quantity, duration, ends, and uses, (Job 23:14; Mic. 6:9; 1 Thess. 3:3) and which are consistent with the justice, holiness, wisdom, love, and goodness of God. If they are in a way of punishment, as they are to wicked and ungodly men; there is no reason to complain of them, since they are less than their sins deserve; and not at all unworthy of a righteous God to will to inflict on them, (Lam. 3:39) all judgments, calamities, and distresses, which come upon kingdoms, nations, cities, towns, and particular persons, are all of God, and according to his will (Amos 3:6). Not that God wills these things for the sake of them; or as taking delight in the afflictions and miseries of his creatures, (Lam. 3:33; Ezek. 18:32) but for the sake of some good: the afflictions of his people are for their spiritual good, as well as for his own glory: and the punishment of the wicked is for the glorifying of his justice.

3blb. There is "malum culpae", or the evil of fault and blame, that is sin: about this there is some difficulty how the will of God should be concerned in it, consistent with his purity and holiness: that the will of God is some way or other concerned with it is most certain; for he either wills it or not wills it: the latter cannot be said, because nothing comes to pass, God not willing it, (Lam. 3:37) or he neither wills it, nor not wills it; that is, he has no care about it, nor concern at all with it; and so it is outside the area of jurisdiction, and not within the reach of his providence; which cannot be admitted, and which none will say, but those who are atheistically inclined (see Ezek. 9:9; Zep. 1:12). Besides, as Beza, and other divines argue,

unless God had voluntarily permitted sin to be, there could be no display, neither of his punitive justice, nor of his mercy: to which may be added, that God's foreknowledge of sin most fully proves his will in it; that God foreknew sin would be, is certain; as the fall of Adam; since he made a provision, in Christ, for the saving of men out of it, before it was; and so other sins (see 2 Sam. 12:11, 16:22). Now certain and immutable foreknowledge, such as the foreknowledge of God, is founded upon some certain and immutable cause; which can be no other than the divine will; God foreknows, certainly, that such and such things will be; because he has determined in his will they shall be. To set this affair in the best light, it will be proper to consider, what is in sin, and relative to it: there is the act of sin, and there is the guilt of sin, which is an obligation to punishment, and the punishment itself. Concerning the two last there can be no difficulty; that God should will that men that sin should become guilty; be reckoned, accounted, and treated as such; or lie under obligation to punishment; nor that he should will the punishment of them, and appoint and foreordain them to it for it (Prov. 16:4; Jude 1:4). The only difficulty is, about the act of sin; and this may be considered either as natural or moral; or the act, and the ataxy, disorder, rregularity, and vitiosity of it: as an action, barely considered, it is of God, and according to his will; without which, and the concourse of his providence, none can be performed; he is the fountain and source of all action and motion; in him all live, move, and have their being, (Acts 17:28) but then the vitiosity and irregularity of it, as it is an aberration from the law of God, and a transgression of it, is of men only; and God cannot be said to will this; he forbids it, he abhors and detests it; he takes no pleasure in it; he is of purer eyes than even to behold it with approbation and delight. God cannot will it as sin, or for the sake of itself; but for the sake of some good to be brought about through it; as the fall of Adam, for the glorifying of his justice and mercy, in punishing some of his posterity, and saving others: the sin of Joseph's brethren selling him into Egypt, for the good of Joseph and his father's family, and others; and the sin of the Jews, in crucifying Christ, for the redemption and salvation of men. And besides, God may will one sin as a punishment for another; as it is most certain he has in the case of the Israelites, (Hosea 4:9, 10, 13) of the heathen philosophers, (Rom. 1:28) and of the papists (2 Thess. 2:9-12). Once more, though God may be said, in such senses, to will sin, yet he wills it in a different way than he wills that which is good; he does not will to do it himself, nor to do it by others; but permits it to be done; and which is not a bare permission, but a voluntary permission; and is expressed by God's "giving" up men to their own hearts' lusts, and by "suffering" them to walk in their own sinful ways, (Ps. 81:12; Acts 14:16) he wills it not by his effective will, but by his permissive will; and therefore cannot be chargeable with being the author of sin; since there is a wide difference between doing it himself, and doing it by others, or ordering it to be done, winch only can make him the author of sin; and voluntarily permitting or suffering it to be done by others. I proceed to consider,

IV. The nature and properties of the will of God. And,

First, It is natural and "essential" to him; it is his very nature and essence; his will is himself willing; and therefore there can be but one will in God; for there is but one God, whose nature and essence is one; for though there are three persons in the Godhead, there is but one undivided nature common to them all, and so but one will: they are one, and they agree in one; God is "in one mind", or will; though there may be distinctions of his will, and different objects of it, and divers ways in which he wills, yet it is by one single eternal act of will he wills all things. Hence also his will is incommunicable to a creature; the will of God cannot otherwise be a creature's, but as that they approve of it, acquiesce in it, and submit unto it; even it was incommunicable to the human nature of Christ, though taken into union with the person of the Son of God; yet his divine will, and his human will, are distinct from each other, though the one is subject to the other (John 6:38; Luke 22:42).

Secondly, The will of God is "eternal", as may be concluded from the attribute of "eternity"; for if God is eternal, as he certainly is, even from everlasting to everlasting God, then his will must he eternal, since it is his nature and essence: and from his "immutability"; who changes not, and with whom there is no shadow of turning; but if any new will arises in God in time,

which was not in eternity, there would be a change in him; he would not be the same in time he was in eternity; nor the same in eternity he is in time; whereas, he is the same yesterday, today, and for ever: and from the "foreknowledge" of God, which is eternal; "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world", or from eternity, (Acts 15:18) and now as God's foreknowledge arises from his will, God foreknows what will be, as has been observed, because he has determined, in his will, what shall be; so if his knowledge is eternal, his will must be eternal. Likewise, this may be illustrated by the decree of "election"; that was, certainly, before men had done either good or evil; was from the beginning, or from everlasting; even before the foundation of the world, (Eph. 1:4) and as the decree and determination of the will of God was so early, the same may be concluded of all others: add to all which, the will of God is concerned with "all things" that have been "from the beginning" of the world, now are, or shall be to the end of it; and therefore must be prior to the existence of the world, and things in it; and if prior to them, then prior to time; and if prior to time, must be eternal; for we know of nothing before time but what is eternal.

4c. Thirdly, The will of God is "immutable": immutability is expressly ascribed to the counsel of God; that is, to the will and purpose of God, (Heb. 6:17) and may be established from the attribute of "immutability"; for if God is unchangeably the same, as he is, then his will must be the same, since it is his nature and essence: a change is made in the will of a creature, either by beginning to will what it did not before, or by ceasing to will what it has willed: now the cause of beginning a new will, or willing what it did not, supposes previous ignorance of the thing now begun to be willed; not knowing the fitness and propriety of it, being ignorant of its nature, excellence, and utility; for of an unknown thing there can be no desire and will: but such a change of will can never take place in God, on such a footing; since it is not only contrary to his eternity and immutability, but to his knowledge, whose understanding is infinite: or a creature changes its will, when it ceases to will what it has willed; which is either of choice, or of obligation to it; of choice, when something unforeseen occurs, which causes it to change its will, and take another course: but nothing of this kind can befall God, before whom all things are at once and together, naked and open; even from all eternity: or else of force, being obliged unto it, because it cannot accomplish its will, and therefore drops it, and takes another course: "But who hath resisted his will", the will of God, so as to cause him to cease from it, and drop it? If God changes his will, it must be either for the better or the worse; and either way it would betray imperfection in him, and want of wisdom;

God may change his outward dispensations of things, but he never changes his will: repentance attributed to him is no proof of it; "He is in one mind, and who can turn him?" his will is not to be turned nor altered, no not by the prayers of his people. But of these things see more under the attribute of "immutability", before treated of.

Fourthly, The will of God is always efficacious; there are no wishes, would-bes, or feeble degrees of volition in God; his will is always effected, never made null and void; he does whatever he pleases, or wills; his counsel always stands, and he ever does his pleasure; otherwise he would not be almighty, as he is: it must be for want of power, if his will is not fulfilled, which cannot be said; as he is omnipotent, so is his will; yea, Austin calls it, his most omnipotent will: if this was not the case, there would be somewhat, or some one "superior" to him; whereas he is God over all, the most High, higher than the highest; and can never be contradicted by any: and was his will ineffectual, he would be "frustrated" and disappointed of his end: but as nothing comes to pass which man says, and the Lord commands it not; so everything the Lord says, wills, and orders, most certainly comes to pass; "For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?" yea, he hath sworn, saying, "Surely, as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, it shall stand" (Isa. 14:24, 27). Besides if his will was not efficacious, or it failed of accomplishment, he would not be happy: when a man's will is ineffectual, and he cannot accomplish it, it gives him uneasiness, it makes him unhappy; but this can never be said of God, who is the blessed, the blessed God, blessed forevermore.

Fifthly, The will of God has "no cause" out of himself; for then there would be something prior to

him, and greater and more excellent than he; as every cause is before its effect, and more excellent than that; and his will would be dependent on another, and so he not be the independent Being he is: nor can there be any impulsive or moving cause of his will; because there is in him no passive power to work upon; he is purely act, "actus simplicissimus", a pure, active Spirit: if he consisted of act and power, he would not be the simple and uncompounded Spirit he is; wherefore, to be impelled or moved by any cause, would be contrary to his simplicity, before established: he may indeed be said to will one thing for another; but then that which he wills for another, is no moving cause of his will; these may have the nature of cause and effect between themselves; but neither of them the cause of the will of God; nor is there any final cause of what he wills and does but his own glory; and it would be madness to seek for a cause of his willing that: and from this property of the will of God, it may be clearly discerned, that foreseen faith, holiness, and good works, cannot be the cause of God's will in the election of any to eternal life; and so the contrary, no cause of his will in the rejection of others.

Sixthly, The will of God, for this same reason, is not conditional; for then it would be dependent on the condition to be performed; and not the will of God, but the performance of the condition, would be the first and chief in the attainment of the end thereby. And, to say no more, if, for instance, God willed to save all men conditionally; that is, on condition of faith and repentance; and to damn them if these conditions are wanting; who does not see that this conditional will, to save and to destroy, is equally the same? destruction is equally willed as salvation; and where is the general love of God to men, so much talked of? there is none at all to any.

Seventhly, The will of God is most free and sovereign; as appears,

1. From the making of the world, and all things in it. That the world is eternal, few have asserted; that it was made, and the scriptures assert, (Rev. 4:11) and the making of it, as to time and order, and things contained in it, is owing to the sovereign will of God; to what else but to his sovereignty can it be ascribed, that he has not made more worlds than he has, who could, if he would, have made ten thousand worlds? or that he should make this world when he did, and not sooner, when he could have made it millions of ages before, if he would? or that he should be six days making that, and all things in it, when he could have made them all in a moment, if he pleased? or that he made this world no larger than it is, and made no more kinds and species of creatures than he has, and those he has made no more numerous than they be? no reason can be assigned, but his sovereign will and pleasure.

2. The sovereignty of the will of God appears in providence, and in the various events of it; as in the births and deaths of men,which are neither of them of the will of men, but of the will of God; and there is a time for both fixed by his will; and in which his sovereignty may be seen; for to what else can it be ascribed, that such and such men should be born, and brought into the world, in such an age, and not before? and that they should go out of the world at the time, in the manner and circumstances they do? and that there should be such difference in men, in their states, conditions, and circumstances in life; that some should be rich, and others poor? riches and poverty are both at the disposal of God, as Agur's prayer shows; and God is the maker both of the rich and poor, not only as men, but as rich and poor men: and to what can this difference be attributed, but to the sovereign will of God? some are raised to great honour and dignity; and others live in a very low, mean, and abject state; but promotion comes neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South; but God puts down one, and sets up another, as he pleases; and these differences and changes may be observed in the same persons, as in Job, who was for many years the greatest man in all the East, and, on a sudden, was stripped of all his riches, honour, and glory, and upon a dunghill; and then, after a while, restored to twice the wealth and riches he had before. So Nebuchadnezzar, the greatest monarch then on earth, and when in the most flourishing circumstances, and in the height of his grandeur, was degraded from his dignity, as a man and monarch, and driven to dwell among beasts, and to become and live like one of them; and, after all, was restored to his reason, and to his throne, and former greatness; which extorted from him such an acknowledgment

of the sovereign will of God as perhaps is no where more strongly expressed; "He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?" (Dan. 4:35). Some are free from sickness and diseases of body all their days; their strength is firm, and no weaknesses in their death, but die in their full strength: while others drag on a life attended with a variety of infirmities and disorders, to their graves; and this is the case of the best of men: to what can it be imputed, but to the sovereign will of God? and how otherwise can be accounted for the many abortions, miscarriages, untimely births, infants that never saw light; and others, as soon as their eyes are opened in this world, are shut again; when others not only go through the stages of infancy, childhood, and manhood, but arrive to a full age, and come to their graves like a shock of corn fully ripe? And a multitude of other things might be observed, in providence; which, though God has wise reasons for them, are unaccountable to us, but are obliged to refer them to his sovereign will and pleasure; who gives no account of his matters to the children of men.

3. The will of God appears to be sovereign in things sacred, spiritual, and religious, both with respect to angels and men: as that some of the angels should be elect, and confirmed by the grace of Christ, in the estate in which they were created, and be preserved from apostasy, while a large number of them were suffered to rebel against God, and leave their first state; for which they were cast down from heaven to hell, and reserved in chains of darkness, to the judgment of the great day, and no mercy shown to any of them; as has been to many of the apostate race of Adam. What other reason can be given for all this, but the sovereign will of God?

Among men, some God loves, and some he hates; and that before good or evil are done by them; some he chooses to everlasting happiness, and others he passes by and rejects; he has mercy on some, and hardens others; just as he, in his sovereignty, wills and pleases: some are redeemed from among men, by Christ, even out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, whom he wills, and resolves to save; when others are left to perish in their sins: for which no other cause can be assigned than the sovereign will and pleasure of God. According to which also e dispenses his gifts to men, and these of different sorts; some fitting for public service, as to ministers of the gospel; and such he makes whensoever he pleases, and gives them gifts differing from one another; to some greater to others less, to some one talent and to others five, dividing to every man individually as he wills, according to his sovereign pleasure: the means of grace, the ministry of the word and ordinances, in all ages, have been disposed of, just as seemed good in his sight; for many hundreds of years, God gave his word to Jacob, and his statutes unto Israel, and other nations knew them not; and these have been since distributed among the Gentiles, sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; and how apparent is the sovereignty of God in favouring our British Isles, these Isles afar off, with the gospel, and gospel ordinances, when so great a part of the world is denied them, and is covered with Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan darkness? and still more it is manifest in that these outward means are, to some, "the savour of life unto life, and to others the savour of death unto death." The special gifts of the grace of God, are bestowed upon men according to the sovereign will of God; of his own will he regenerates some, and not others; calls by his grace, whom he pleases, when and by what means, according to his purpose; reveals the gospel, and the great things of it, to whom he would make them known; and hides them from the wise and prudent; "even so Father", says Christ, "for so it seemed good in thy sight"; nor does he give any other reason for such a conduct. The graces of the Spirit of God are given to some, and not to others; as for nstance, repentance, which is a grant from God, a gift of Christ, was bestowed on Peter, who denied his Lord; and withheld from Judas, that betrayed him. Faith, which is the gift of God, all men have it not; to some it is only given, when others have a spirit of slumber, eyes that they see not, and ears that they hear not. In short, eternal life, which is the free gift of God, through Christ, is given only by him, to as many as the Father has given him, and to these alike; the penny, which seems to mean eternal happiness, in the parable, is given to those who were called to labour in the vineyard in the eleventh hour, as to those who bore the heat and burden of the day: some do much service for Christ, and others very little, and

yet all share the same glory. To what can all this be resolved, but into the sovereign will of God? who says, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?" (Matthew 20:15). But though the will of God is sovereign, it always acts wisely: some sovereign princes will things rashly and foolishly; but God wills nothing contrary to his perfections of wisdom, justice, holiness, &c. and his will is therefore called "counsel", and "the counsel of his will" (Isa. 25:1, 46:10; Eph. 1:11).

Chapter 12

OF THE LOVE OF GOD

Next to the attributes which belong to God, as an intelligent Spirit, to his understanding and will, may be considered, those which may be called "Affections"; for though, properly speaking, there are none in God, he being a most pure and simple act, free from all confusion and disorder; yet there being some things said and done by him, which are similar to affections in intelligent beings, they are ascribed to him; as love, pity, hatred, anger, &c. from which must be removed everything that is carnal, sensual, or has any degree of imperfection in it; and among these, Love stands in the first place; and this enters so much into the nature of God, that it is said, "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). So the Shekinah, or the divine majesty and glory, is, by the Jews, called rQHK "Love"; and the heathens give the same name to God; Plato expressly calls him "Love": and Hesiod speaks of love as the fairest and most beautiful among the immortal gods. In treating of this divine attribute, I shall,

1. Consider the objects of it. And,

1. The principal object of the love of God is himself. Self-love is in all intelligent beings; nor is it discommendable, when it Is not carried to a criminal excess, and to the neglect of others; none are obliged to love others more than themselves, but as themselves (Matthew 22:39). God first and chiefly loves himself; and hence he has made himself, that is, his glory, the ultimate end of all he does in nature, providence, and grace, (Prov. 16:4; Rom. 11:36; Rev. 4:11; Eph. 1:6) and his happiness lies in contemplating himself, his nature and perfections; in that love, complacency and delight he has in himself; nor needs he, nor can he have anything out of himself that can add to his essential happiness.

The three divine Persons in the Godhead mutually love each other; the Father loves the Son and the Spirit, the Son loves the Father and the Spirit, and the Spirit loves the Father and the Son. That the Father loves the Son, is more than once said, (John 3:35, 5:20) and the Son is sometimes called the well beloved and dear Son of God, (Matthew 3:17, 17:5; Col. 1:13) he was from all eternity as "one brought up with him"; and was loved by him before the foundation of the world; and that with a love of complacency and delight; as he must, since "he is the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person", and is of the same nature, and possessed of all the same perfections with him, (Prov. 8:30, 31; John 17:24; Heb. 1:3; Col. 2:9) yea, he loved him as his Servant, as the Mediator, in his state of humiliation, and obedience, and under all his sufferings, and on account of them; and even while he bore his wrath as the sinner's surety, he was the object of his love, as his Son, (Isa. 42:1; Matthew 3:17; John 10:17) and now he is at his right hand, in human nature, he looks upon him with delight, and is well pleased with his sacrifice, satisfaction, and righteousness. The Father loves the Spirit; being the very breath of him, from whence he has his name, and proceeding from him, and possessing the same nature and essence with him (Job 33:4; Ps. 33:6; John 15:26; 1 John 5:7). The Son loves the Father, of whom he is begotten, with whom he was brought up, in whose bosom he lay from all eternity, as his own and only begotten Son; and as man, the law of God was in his heart; the sum of which is to love the Lord God with all the heart and soul; and as Mediator he showed his love to him by an obedience to his commandment, even though that was to suffer death for his people (Ps. 40:8; John 14:31, 10:18; Phil. 2:8). The Son also loves the Spirit, since he proceeds from him, as from the Father, and is called the Spirit of the Son, (Gal. 4:6) and Christ often speaks of him with pleasure and delight, (Isa. 48:16, 61:1; John 14:16, 17, 26, 15:26, 16:7, 13). And the Spirit loves the Father and the Son, and sheds abroad the love of them both in the hearts of his people; he searches into the deep things of God, and reveals them to them; and takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto them; and so is both the Comforter of them, and the Glorifier of him (1 Cor. 2:10-12; John 16:14).

2. All that God has made is the object of his love; all the works of creation, when he had made them, he looked over them, and saw that they were good, "very good", (Gen. 1:31) he was well pleased, and delighted with them; yea, he is said to "rejoice in his works", (Ps. 104:31) he upholds all creatures in their beings, and is the Preserver of all, both men and beasts; and is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works, (Ps. 36:6, 145:9) and particularly, rational creatures are the objects of his care, love, and delight: he loves the holy angels, and has shown his love to them in choosing them to happiness; hence they are called "elect angels", (1 Tim. 5:21) by making Christ the head of them, by whom they are confirmed in the estate in which they were created, (Col. 2:10) and by admitting them into his presence, allowing them to stand before him, and behold his face, (Matthew 18:10) yea, even the devils, as they are the creatures of God, are not hated by him, but as they are apostate spirits from him: and so he bears a general love to all men, as they are his creatures, his offspring, and the work of his hands; he supports them, preserves them, and bestows the bounties of his providence in common upon them, (Acts17:28, 14:17; Matthew 5:45) but he bears a special love to elect men in Christ; which is called his "great love", (Eph. 2:4) whom he has chosen and blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, (Eph. 1:3, 4) and which love is distinguishing and discriminating (Mai 1:1, 2; Rom. 9:11, 12). I go on to,

II. Give some instances of the love of God, particularly to chosen men in Christ, and who share in the love of Father, Son, and Spirit.

The love of the Father has appeared in thinking of them, thoughts of peace; in contriving and forming the scheme of their peace and reconciliation in Christ, from eternity, (2 Cor. 5:18, 19) in choosing them in him from the beginning, even from everlasting, to salvation, by him, (2 Thess. 2:13) in putting their persons into the hands of Christ, and securing and preserving them in him, (Deut. 33:3; Jude 1:1) in laying up all blessings in him for them, and blessing them with them so early, (Eph. 1:3, 4) in appointing Christ to be the Saviour of them; in providing, promising, and sending him into the world, to work out their salvation, (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9, 10; Titus 3:4, 5) in the pardon of their sins through the blood of Christ, (Isa. 38:17; Eph. 1:7) in their adoption, (1 John 3:1) in their regeneration and conversion, (Jer. 31:3; Eph. 2:4, 5) and in the gift of eternal life unto them (Rom. 6:23).

The love of the Son of God appears in espousing the persons of the elect, those sons of men, in whom his delights were before the world was, (Prov. 8:31; Hosea 2:19) in becoming their Surety for good, undertaking their cause, engaging to do the will of God with that cheerfulness he did; which was to work out their salvation, (Ps. 40:6-8; Heb. 7:22) in assuming their nature, in the fullness of time, to redeem them, work out a righteousness, and make reconciliation for them, (Gal. 4:4, 5; Rom. 8:3, 4; Heb. 2:14, 17) by giving himself a Sacrifice for them; laying down his life on their account; and shedding his blood for the cleansing of their souls, and the remission of their sins (Eph. 5:2, 25; Titus 2:14; 1 John 3:16; Rev. 1:5).

The love of the Spirit, of which mention is made in (Rom. 15:30) appears in his coming into the hearts of God's elect, to convince them of sin and righteousness, and to comfort them; by showing the grace of the covenant, and the blessings of it to them; by opening and applying the promises of it; and by shedding abroad the love of God and Christ in their hearts; by implanting every grace in them, and drawing them forth into exercise; by witnessing to their spirits their adoption; by assisting them in every duty, particularly in prayer, making intercession for them, according to the will of God; and in being the earnest, pledge, and seal of them to the day of redemption (John 16:7, 8; Rom. 8:15, 16, 26, 27; Eph. 1:13, 14).

3. It may be proper next to consider the properties of the love of God towards chosen men, which will lead more into the nature of it. And,

1. There is no cause of it out of God; there is no motive or inducement to it in them, no loveliness in them to excite it; all men by nature are corrupt and abominable; rather to be loathed than loved; and those that are loved, are no better than others, all being under sin; and are, "by nature, children of wrath, as others"; as deserving of that as those that are not loved, (Rom. 3:9; Eph. 2:3) what loveliness or beauty is in saints, is owing to the righteousness of Christ, imputed to them; which is that comeliness that is put upon them, whereby they are made perfectly comely; and to the sanctifying grace of the Spirit,

whereby they are all glorious within, and appear in the beauties of holiness: so that all this is the fruit of the love of God, and not the cause of it. Nor can it be any love in them to God, that is the cause of his to them; for they had no love in them when Christ died for them; nor until regenerated by the Spirit of God; and when they love him, it is because he first loved them, (1 John 4:10, 19) and though Christ is said to love them that love him, and the Father is said to love them too; yet this must not be understood of the first love of God and Christ, unto them, nor of the first display of it; but of further and larger manifestations of it to them; and is descriptive of the persons who are most certainly and evidently the objects of their love; but not as being the cause of it, (Prov. 8:17; John 14:21, 23, 16:27). Nor are good works the cause of this love; for this, at least, in one instance of it, was before either good or evil were done, (Rom. 9:11, 12) and in other instances it broke forth towards them, and broke in upon them while they were yet in their sins, and before they were capable of performing good works, (Rom. 5:8; Titus 3:3, 4; Eph. 2:2-4) and how can it be thought, that since the best works of men are so impure and imperfect as to be reckoned as filthy rags, that these should be the cause of God's love to men? no, even faith itself is not; that "is the gift of God", and flows from electing love, and is a fruit and evidence of it (Eph. 2:8; Acts 13:48; Titus 1:1). God loves men, not because they have faith; but they have faith given them, because God loves them; it is true indeed, that "without faith it is impossible to please God"; that is, to do those things which are pleasing in his sight; but then the persons of God's elect, may be, and are, well pleasing to God, in Christ, before faith, and without it. In short, the love of God purely flows from his good will and pleasure; who "is gracious to whom he will be gracious", (Ex. 33:19) it is that pure river that proceeds out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb, as an emblem of sovereignty, (Rev. 22:1) as God loved the people of Israel because he loved them, or would love them; and for no other reason, (Deut. 7:7, 8) in like manner he loves his spiritual and mystical Israel.

2. The love of God is eternal, it does not commence in time, it is without beginning, it is from eternity: this is evident from the love of God to Christ, which was before the foundation of the world; and with the same love he loved him, he loved his people also, and as early, (John 17:23, 24) and from various acts of love to them in eternity; as the election of them in Christ, which supposes the love of them, (Eph. 1:4) the covenant of grace made with them, in which, grants of grace, and promises of glory, were made before the world began; and Christ was set up as the Mediator of it from everlasting: all which are strong proofs of love to them (2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2; Prov. 8:22, 23).

3. The love of God is immutable, unalterable, and invariable; it is like himself, "the same today, yesterday, and for ever": and, indeed, God is love; it is his nature; it is himself; and therefore must be without any variableness, or shadow of turning. It admits of no distinctions, by which it appears to alter and vary. Some talk of a love of benevolence, by which God wishes or wills good to men; and then comes on a love of beneficence, and he does good to them, and works good in them: and then a love of complacency and delight takes place, and not till then. But this is to make God changeable, as we are: the love of God admits of no degrees, it neither increases nor decreases; it is the same from the instant in eternity it was, without any change: it is needless to ask whether it is the same before as after conversion, since there were as great, if not greater gifts of love, bestowed on the object loved, before conversion, as after; such as the gift of God himself, in the everlasting covenant; the gift of his Son to die for them when in their sins; and the gift of the Spirit to them, in order to regenerate, quicken, and convert them; heaven itself, eternal life, is not a greater gift than these; and yet they were all before conversion. There never were any stops, lets, or impediments to this love; not the fall of Adam, nor the sad effects of it; nor the actual sins and transgressions of God's people, in a state of nature; nor all their backslidings, after called by grace; for still he loves them freely, (Hosea 14:4) for God foreknew that they would fall in Adam, with others, that they would be transgressors from the womb, and do as evil as they could; yet this hindered not his taking up thoughts of love towards them, his choice of them, and covenant with them. Conversion makes a change in them; brings them from the power of Satan to God, from darkness to light, from bondage to liberty; from fellowship with evil men to communion with God: but

it makes no change in the love of God; God changes his dispensations and dealings with them, but never changes his love; he sometimes rebukes and chastises them, but still he loves them; he sometimes hides his face from them, but his love continues the same, (Ps. 89:29-33; Isa. 54:7-10) the manifestations of his love are various; to some they are greater, to others less; and so to the same persons, at different times; but love in his own heart is invariable and unchangeable.

4. The love of God endures for ever; it is an everlasting love, in that sense, (Jer. 31:3) it is the bond of union between God and Christ, and the elect; and it can never be dissolved; nothing can separate it, nor separate from it (Rom. 8:35, 38, 39). The union it is the bond of, is next to that, and like it, which is between the three divine persons (John 17:21, 23). The union between soul and body, may be, and is dissolved, at death; but neither death nor life can separate from this; this lovingkindness of God never departs; though health, and wealth, and friends, and life itself may depart, this never will, (Isa. 54:10) whatever God takes away, as all the said things may be taken away by him, he will never take away this, (Ps. 89:33) having loved his own which were in the world, he loves them to the end, to the end of their lives, to the end of time, and to all eternity (John 13:1).

Chapter 13

OF THE GRACE OF GOD

This attribute may be considered, both as it is in God himself, and as displayed in acts towards his creatures; as in himself, it is himself; it is his nature and essence; he is "Grace" itself, most amiable and lovely; hence so often called "gracious" in Scripture: it is a character expressive of the amiableness and loveliness of his nature: and thus he was before he had, and would have been for ever the same if he never had displayed his grace towards any of his creatures. And this appears from the loveliness of Christ, the image of the Father, the express image of his person; who, to them that believe, is exceeding precious, and altogether lovely; when they behold his glory, as the only begotten of the Father; the fulness of grace in him, as Mediator; the purity, perfection, and beauty of his human nature, as in union with his divine person, in which he was in high favour with God and men. Now if Christ, under these several considerations, is so graceful and amiable, he must needs be infinitely so, whose image he is, and who has all virtues, all excellencies, all perfections in him; he is said to be "glorious in holiness" (Ex. 15:11). And if he is so glorious and graceful, viewed in one perfection of his, what must he be when all put together, and he is viewed in them all, his goodness, wisdom, power, justice, truth, &c.? and therefore is to be loved above all, and with all the heart, soul, and strength; and hence it is that good men, as Moses, David, and others, desired to see the "face" of God, so far as could be admitted, and they were capable of, (Ex. 33:14, 15; Ps 27:7, 8, 105:4) and what a lovely sight had Moses of him in the clift of the rock, when he caused his goodness to pass, and proclaimed his name, a God gracious before him, (Ex. 33:19, 34:6) and to see the lovely face of God, so far as creatures are capable of, is the happiness of angels, will be the happiness of saints to all eternity (Matthew 18:10; 1 Cor. 13:12; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 22:4).

The grace of God may be considered as displayed in acts of goodness towards his creatures, especially men; and is no other than his free favour and good will to men; it is no other than love unmerited and undeserved, exercising and communicating itself to them in a free and generous manner; which they are altogether unworthy of. There are many things called grace, and the grace of God, because they flow from his grace, and are the effects of it; as the gospel, (2 Cor. 6:1; Gal. 5:4; Titus 2:11) gifts for preaching the gospel, (Rom. 12:6; Eph. 3:7, 8) the blessings of grace, as justification, adoption, &c. (Ps 84:11; 2 Tim. 1:9) in each of the graces of the Spirit in regeneration, as faith, hope, love, &c. (2 Cor. 9:8; Gal. 2:9) but then these are to be distinguished from grace in God; as the Giver and the gift, the Fountain and the streams, the Cause and the effect. The grace of God arises from the goodness of his nature, and not from anything in the creature; and is exercised according to his sovereign will and pleasure; "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious" (Ex. 33:19). It is "independent" of all merit and worth in creatures, and of all works done by them, and is always opposed to them in scripture, (Rom. 11:6; 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 2:8, 9) it is quite entirely "free", as Austin said long ago, grace is not grace, unless it is altogether free. As an attribute, it wholly

and only "resides" in God; and is only in men, as to the sense and perception of it, and the effects of it upon them and in them, (Rom. 5:5, 8:37) and it is only exhibited and displayed through Christ, in and through whom men are elected, adopted, redeemed, justified, pardoned, regenerated, and sanctified (Eph. 1:4-7; Rom. 3:24; Titus 3:5, 6). And though there are various gifts and blessings, and effects of it, it is but one in God: there is but one Fountain, from whence they all flow. With respect to creatures, the objects of it, some distinctions are made concerning it, as of natural and "supernatural" grace. Natural grace seems to sound oddly, and unless guarded against, may tend to confound nature and grace together; but rightly applied and understood, may be admitted. What Adam enjoyed, in a state of integrity, above the rest of creatures, was all owing to the unmerited kindness and goodness of God, and so may be called grace; as the image of God, in which he was created; his holiness and righteousness; knowledge and understanding; the communion he had with God, and his dominion over the creatures; and yet it was all natural: so many things which his posterity in their fallen state enjoy, being altogether owing to the free favour and undeserved goodness of God, may be called grace: to have a being, and life, and the preservation of it, and the mercies of life, as food and raiment, which men are altogether unworthy of, are gifts and favours; and so may bear the name of grace, though only natural blessings. "Supernatural" grace includes all the blessings of grace bestowed upon any of the sons of fallen Adam; and all the graces of the Spirit wrought in them; and which will easily be allowed to be supernatural. But that Adam had any such, in a state of innocence, for my own part, I cannot see; though some are of this opinion. Again, grace is, by some, distinguished into "common" or "general", and "special" or "particular". "Common" or "general" grace, if it may be so called, is what all men have; as the light of nature and reason, which every man that comes into the world is enlightened with; the temporal blessings of life, the bounties of providence, called the riches of God's goodness, or grace, (Rom. 2:4) which all partake of, more or less; and the continuance and preservation of life; for "God is the Saviour of all men" (1 Tim. 4:10). "Special" or "particular" grace, is that which is peculiar to some persons only; such as electing, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, adopting, and sanctifying grace, (Rom. 8:30) and this special grace is, by some, distinguished into "imputed" and "inherent" grace: "imputed" grace is the holiness, obedience, and righteousness of Christ imputed to justification: "inherent" grace is what is wrought in the heart, by the Spirit of God, in regeneration. But these distinctions, with others, only concern the effects of the grace of God; that itself is but one in God; and is sure, firm, and immutable, as his nature is; and is the efficient cause, source, and spring, of all good things enjoyed by men; and should be acknowledged, as it was by the apostle, "By the grace of God I am what I am", (1 Cor. 15:10) whether as a man, or as a minister, or as a Christian; and this is the final cause, or ultimate end of all, that God does towards, upon, or in his elect, through Christ; all is "to the glory of his grace", (Eph. 1:6) and is what appears, shines forth, and is illustrious in every part and branch of their salvation; and therefore they are said to be "saved by grace", (Eph. 2:5, 8) as will be evident by an enumeration of them.

1. The grace of God appears in the election of men to everlasting life; and is therefore called the election of grace; and is denied to be of works, (Rom. 11:5, 6) and, indeed, this act of the grace of God, passed in his eternal mind, before any works were done, good or evil, and without any consideration of them, (Rom. 9:11) nor can any works truly good be done, until men become the workmanship of God in regeneration; and then they are the fruits and effects of divine preordination, (Eph. 2:10) nor were men chosen in Christ because they were holy, but that they might be holy (Eph. 1:4). And sanctification, both internal and external, is a means fixed in the decree of election; and is as absolute, unconditional, and certain, as the end, salvation, (2 Thess. 2:13) and all the true holiness that is, has been, or will be in the world, flows from electing grace; had it not been for this, the world had been as Sodom and Gomorrah (Rom. 9:29). Election is also irrespective of faith; that is likewise a means fixed in the decree, and most certainly follows upon it, and is therefore called the faith of God's elect (2 Thess. 2:13; Acts 13:17; Titus 1:1). It remains, therefore, that election must be ascribed to the free favour, good will, and pleasure of God, to his unmerited grace and

goodness, the true spring and cause of it; and to show forth which is the design of it (Rom. 9:18, 23; Eph. 1:4-6).

2. The grace of God is displayed in the covenant he has made with his elect in Christ; this, with great propriety, is commonly called by us, "the covenant of grace"; though the phrase is not in so many words to be met with in scripture; it is founded in the unmerited grace and mercy of God; and is made to establish and secure the glory of it (Ps 89:2, 3). It was free grace that moved God to make one, to which he was not otherwise obliged: it was free grace that called, and that moved Christ to engage with his Father in it, and which "gave" him to be the covenant of the people, (Ps 40:6, 7; Isa. 42:6) it was free grace that stored it with all spiritual blessings; by which it appears to be ordered in all things for the glory of God, and the good of his covenant people; and these are grants of grace, made in it to them in Christ, (2 Tim. 1:9) and it was free grace that filled it with exceeding great and precious promises; promises of grace and glory, made before the world began; and which made them sure by an oath to the heirs of them; and who become heirs of them, not through any merit of theirs, but through the undeserved favour of God towards them.

3. The grace of God is very manifest in the adoption of the chosen ones; the cause of which is, the good pleasure of the will of God; and the end of it, the glory of his grace (Eph. 1:5, 6). God, the adopter, stood not in any need of sons; he had a Son, an only begotten Son, a beloved Son, the dear Son of his love, who always pleased him, his Son and Heir; the adopted are altogether unworthy of such a favour, being "by nature children of wrath, as others"; and these men, and not angels, who are only servants in the family, to wait upon the children, the heirs of salvation, and minister unto them: and not all the race of men, only some, and these no better in themselves than others; and therefore their adoption cannot be ascribed to anything else but the free and distinguishing grace of God; and into which relation they were taken before time, in the everlasting covenant; and Christ was sent to open the way, that they might receive this blessing of grace, and which they do by faith, the gift of God; for faith does not make them, only manifests them to be the sons of God; which relation is the ground of their having the Spirit, faith, and every other grace (Gal. 4:4-6).

4. The grace of God shines very illustrious in redemption by Jesus Christ; free grace set infinite wisdom to work, to find out a proper person to be the redeemer and saviour; and it found out Christ to be the ransom, and provided him to be the sacrifice, (Job 33:24) his incarnation was owing to God's good will to men, (Luke 2:14) and his mission to his unmerited love, (1 John 4:10) and it was by the grace of God he tasted death for men, (Heb. 2:9) and this for sinners, the chief of sinners, ungodly men, enemies in their minds by wicked works. In short, all that are redeemed and saved, whether Old or New Testament saints, are saved by the grace of God and Christ (Acts 15:11).

5. The grace of God is very conspicuous in the justification of men before God, and acceptance with him; which, in the strongest terms, is said to be of grace, to be by "his grace", the grace of God, and "freely" by his grace, and that through the redemption that is in Christ (Titus 3:7; Rom. 3:24). Free grace, by infinite wisdom, found out the way whereby sinful men might be just with God; which otherwise never could have been; namely, by not imputing their trespasses to them, but to Christ, the Surety free grace provided, whereby "God is just, and yet the justifier of him that believes in Jesus", (2 Cor. 5:19; Rom. 3:25, 26) free grace appears in appointing Christ to work out, and bring in everlasting righteousness; and in sending him in the likeness of sinful flesh to do it, (Dan. 9:24; Rom. 8:3, 4) and it was free grace moved Christ to come to do this will of God, and "become the end of the law for righteousness"; and it was free grace in God the Father to accept of this righteousness, in the room and stead of sinners, and to impute it, without works, unto them, as their justifying righteousness; and in appointing faith to be the recipient of it, that so it might clearly appear to be of grace; as the persons who are justified by it, being in themselves ungodly, more clearly shows it, (Rom. 4:5, 6, 16).

Justification is always denied to be of works; and the righteousness by which men are justified, is represented as a gift, a free gift, a gift by grace, as faith that receives it also is (Rom. 3:20, 28, 5:15-17; Eph. 2:8).

6. Pardon of sin is according to the riches, fulness,

and freeness of the grace of God, (Eph. 1:7) the promise of it in the covenant is free, absolute, and unconditional, (Heb. 8:12) the proclamation of it in the gospel, bore witness to by all the prophets, is the same, (Ex. 34:6; Acts 10:43, 13:38) the blood of Christ was shed freely for it; and though it cost him dear, it is all of free grace to sinners, without money and without price. Christ is exalted as a prince to "give" it; and God, for Christ's sake, frankly forgives all trespasses, (Acts 5:31; Luke 7:41, 42; Col. 2:13) and it is vouchsafed to the worst and chief of sinners, (1 Tim. 1:13) and to great backsliders, ungrateful persons, guilty of sins of omission and commission, (Hosea 14:4; Isa. 43:22-25).

7. The grace of God is abundantly evident in regeneration, calling, and sanctification; God regenerates men by his grace, and of his own good will and pleasure, (James 1:18) and he calls them by his grace, and according to it, (Gal. 1:15; 2 Tim. 1:9) and which always becomes effectual. There are some things which bear the name of grace, which fall short of true sanctifying grace, at least what men call so, as "restraining grace"; whereby some of God's people, before conversion, and some others, are kept from the commission of gross sins others fall into; and external "gifts" of grace, as a rational knowledge of the gospel, historical faith, and even gifts for the public ministry; which persons may have, and yet be unknown by Christ, and be castaways. And also what some call "sufficient grace", though wrongly; rather it should be called, insufficient; for that can never be sufficient which is ineffectual; as the means of grace often are. There are other distinctions of grace, which are not very material, yet, if rightly explained and understood, may be allowed, as grace "preparing, anticipating, operating", and "co-operating", and "subsequent". "Preparing" grace must be understood not of preparations, and previous dispositions in men, and of them, to the grace of God; but what is of God himself, who prepares the heart, and makes it, by his grace, good ground, fit to receive the seed of the word cast into it, where it becomes the ingrafted word (Prov. 16:1; Matthew 13:23). "Anticipating" grace is that in which God goes beforehand with men, and enlightens their minds, teaches and instructs them in the knowledge of themselves, and of Christ, and guides, directs, and draws them to him, (John 6:44, 45) "Operating" grace is that by which God works in men, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). "Co-operating" grace is that by which men act, being acted or wrought upon, and by which they run, being drawn (Song 1:4). And "subsequent" grace is that by which the work of grace is carried on, and performed until the day of Christ (Phil. 1:6). Though there seems to be no great need of these distinctions; the most proper epithet of the grace of God, as displayed in regeneration, calling, and conversion, is, that it is "efficacious"; it never fails of its effects: and it is always "persevering" grace, and is never lost or comes to nothing; but issues in everlasting salvation; and all is owing to unmerited goodness. Every grace implanted in regeneration, flows from the free favour and good will of God.

Faith is a gift, a free grace gift, a distinguishing gift; not given to all men, only to whom the Lord pleases (Eph. 2:8 2; Thess. 3:2). Repentance is a grant of God's grace, a gift of Christ, and a blessing of the covenant (Acts 5:31, 11:18; Ezek. 36:26).

Hope is a good hope through grace; what men, in a state of nature, are without; and which God, of his free grace, gives (2 Thess. 2:16). The same may be said of every other grace, love, humility, patience, &c.

8. Lastly, Eternal life is the free gift of God, through Christ, a free grace gift through him (Rom. 6:23). The introduction of all the Lord's people into the enjoyment of it, will be attended with shouts and acclamations, crying "grace, grace, unto it!" (Zech. 4:7) and which will be the employment of saints to all eternity; and so the great and ultimate end of God in their salvation, will be answered, namely, "the glory of his grace" (Eph. 1:6).

Chapter 14

OF THE MERCY OF GOD

The Mercy of God differs, in some respects; both from the love and grace of God; from the love of God in its objects, and order of operation: in its objects; which, though the same, are regarded under different considerations. Love pitched itself originally on objects, in the pure mass of creatureship, as unfallen, though it continues with them in their fallen state, and through all the imperfections of this life, to eternal

happiness; mercy supposes its objects miserable, and so fallen: in order of operation; for though they are together in God, the one as early as the other, yet love seems to work by mercy, and mercy from it; the objects being viewed as dead in sin, and for it, love stirs up mercy to quicken them with Christ, and in themselves; God, "who is rich in mercy, for the great love", &c. (Eph. 2:4, 5). Mercy also differs from grace; for though all mercy is grace, because it is free, unmerited, undeserved; yet all grace is not mercy: much grace and favour are shown to the elect angels; in the choice of them in Christ; in the preservation of them from the apostasy others of their species fell into; in constituting Christ the head of them, by whose grace they are confirmed in the state in which they were created; and in their being indulged with the presence of God, and communion with him; they always beholding his face in heaven; all which is abundant grace, but not mercy; since they never were miserable, and so not objects of mercy. The things to be considered respecting this attribute, are,

1. The properties of it, which will lead more clearly into its nature, and the knowledge of it.

l. Mercy is natural and essential to God; yea, it is his nature and essence: hence he is often described as "merciful", (Ex. 34:6; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 116:5) indeed it is not to be considered as a passion, or affection in God, as it is in men; attended with grief and sorrow, with anguish and anxiety of mind for the party in misery; which become the more vehement, the nearer the relation is, and the stronger the love and affection is, bore to the object. Hence the stoic philosophers denied mercy to belong to good men, and so not to God; and, indeed, it does not, in such sense, unless by an anthropopathy, or speaking after the manner of men; since he is free from all passion and perturbation of mind. The Latin word "Misericordia" signifies, as one observes, having another's misery at heart; but not a miserable heart, or one made so by the misery of another, especially as applied to God; with whom it is no other than a propensity of his will to help persons in distress, whether in a temporal or spiritual way; and this is as essential to him as is his goodness; of which it is a branch: and therefore as God is essentially, originally, independently, and underivatively good, so is he in like manner merciful. This is one of the perfections which are in some measure imitable by creatures; "Be ye merciful as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). The Socinians deny that mercy is essential to God, supposing that mercy and justice are opposite, whereas they are not, not even in men; a man may be just, and yet merciful, merciful and yet just: and not caring to allow justice to be essential to God, which they think they must grant, if mercy is; which would establish the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, and make that necessary which they do not choose to embrace. But though mercy is natural and essential to God, it is not naturally and necessarily bore towards, and exercised on every object in misery: for then all would share in it, that are in misery, even all wicked men and devils; whereas it is certain they do not; but it is guided in the exercise of it by the love of God; and is governed and influenced by his sovereign will; who "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy", (Rom. 9:15, 18) just as omnipotence is essential to God, but is not necessarily put forth to do everything it could; but is directed and guided by the will of God; who does whatsoever he pleases.

2. Mercy being essential to God, or his nature and essence, nothing out of himself can be the cause of it; for then there would be a cause prior to him, the Cause of himself, and that would be god, and not he: the misery of a creature is not the cause of mercy in God; who is not to be moved and wrought upon as creatures are; being a most simple act, and having no passive power to work upon; besides, was this the case, all must partake of mercy, since all are miserable; which they do not; see (Isa. 27:11) nor are the merits of the creature, or works of righteousness, the cause of mercy; these are opposed to each other in the business of salvation, (Titus 3:5) nor are those to whom mercy is shown, more deserving than those to whom it is not; and oftentimes less deserving, or more vile and sinful; see (Rom. 3:9; Eph. 2:3; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Tim. 1:13). Nor are even the merits of Christ, or his obedience, sufferings, and death, the cause of mercy in God; for they are the fruits and effects of it, and flow from it; it is "through the tender mercy of our God, that the dayspring from on high hath visited us", (Luke 1:78) that is, it is owing to mercy, that Christ, who is meant by "the dayspring from on high", became incarnate, obeyed, suffered, and died, in our room and

stead, and wrought out salvation for us. The mercy of God arises from the goodness of his nature, from his special love to his people, and from

his sovereign will and pleasure; who, as he loves whom he pleases, and "is gracious to whom he will be gracious"; so "he has mercy on whom he will have mercy" (Ex. 33:19).

3. The mercy of God is infinite; as his nature is infinite, so are each of his attributes. His "understanding is infinite", (Ps. 147:5) and so his knowledge, wisdom, justice, holiness, and goodness, and likewise his mercy; it is so in its nature, and in its effects; and this appears both by bestowing an infinite good on men, which is Christ, who is the gift of God, and owing to the love, grace, and mercy of God; and who though, as man, is finite; yet, in his divine person, infinite; and as such given, (Isa. 9:6) and by his delivering them from an infinite evil, sin: sin, as an act of the creature, is finite; but objectively, infinite, as it is committed against God, the infinite Being, (Ps. 51:4) and therefore is not only infinite with respect to number, (Job 22:5) but with respect to its object, and also with respect to punishment for it; the demerit of it is eternal death; and this cannot be endured at once, or answered for in a short time; it is carried on "ad infinitum", without end; and therefore spoken of as everlasting and eternal. Now mercy has provided for the forgiveness of sin, and for the deliverance of men from the punishment of it, and from being liable to it (Heb. 8:12).

4. The mercy of God is eternal; the eternity of mercy is expressed in the same language as the eternity of God himself; and, indeed, since it is his nature, it must be as eternal as he himself is; see (Ps. 90:2, 103:17) it is from everlasting, as his love is; which is to be proved by the instances of it, called his "tender mercies", which "have been ever of old", or from everlasting, (Ps. 25:6) the council and covenant of peace were in eternity; in which the scheme of reconciliation to God was formed, and the method of it settled, which supposed them enemies, and so considered them as fallen creatures, and objects of mercy: and, indeed, the covenant of grace, which was from everlasting, is a superstructure of mercy, (Ps. 89:1-3) and since mercy is from everlasting, not anything in time can be the cause of it; not the misery of the creature, by the fall of Adam, nor works of righteousness done after conversion; nor the obedience and sufferings of Christ; things in time: and the mercy of God is to everlasting, in its fruits and effects; it is kept with Christ, and for him, the Mediator of the covenant; into whose hands are put all the promises and blessings of mercy; called, therefore, "the sure mercies of David", (Ps. 89:24, 28; Isa. 55:3) even temporal blessings, which flow from the mercy of God, are new every morning, and are daily continued; and spiritual ones always remain; the mercy of God never departs from his people, notwithstanding their backslidings; and though he chides them for them, and hides his face from them, yet still he has mercy on them (Ps. 89: 30-33; Isa. 54:6-10; Jer. 3:12,14). Hence,

5. The mercy of God is immutable, as he himself is, and his love also; and therefore the objects of it are not consumed, (Mai. 3:6) it is invariably the same in every state and condition into which they come; it is, as the Virgin Mary expresses it, "from generation to generation", without any variation or change (Luke 1:50).

6. It is common to all the three divine persons, Father, Son, and Spirit; for as there is one common undivided essence, of which each equally partakes, the same divine perfections and attributes belong to them, and so this of mercy: mercy is ascribed to the God and Father of Christ, (1 Peter 1:3) and to our Lord Jesus Christ; not only as Man and Mediator, but as the true God and eternal life; to whose mercy we are to look for it, (Jude 1:21) and to the blessed Spirit, who helps the infirmities of the saints, "and makes intercession for them with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26).

7. Mercy is displayed only in and through Christ; God out of Christ is a consuming fire; it is only in him God proclaims his name, "a God gracious and merciful"; he is the mercy seat, and throne of grace, at which men obtain mercy and find grace; he is the channel through which it flows, and through whom it, in its effects, is conveyed to the sons of men: they are right who cast themselves not on the absolute mercy of God out of Christ; but upon his mercy, as displayed in him, as the Publican did (Luke 18:13). In a word, it is represented, as great, large, and ample, and very abundant; we read of a "multitude" of tender mercies;

and God is said to be "rich" and "plenteous" in it; as will appear more fully by considering the objects and instances of it (Ps. 103:11, 51:1; 1 Peter 1:3; Eph. 2:4; Ps. 86:5).

II. The objects of mercy may be next observed: and that this may appear in a plain and clear light, it will be proper to remark, that the mercy of God is general and special: with respect to the general mercy of God, all creatures are the objects of it; "the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works", (Ps. 145:9) there is not a creature in all the earth but partakes of it; hence says the Psalmist, "The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy!" (Ps. 119:64) even the brute creation, the mute animals, share in it; it is owing to mercy that they are preserved in their beings, (Ps. 36:5, 6) and that a provision of food is made for their sustenance; and who sometimes are in great distress, and when they cry to God he gives them their food, (Joel 1:18-20; Ps. 104:27, 28, 147:9; Job 38:41). All men, good and bad, partake of the providential goodness and mercy of God; he is kind to the unthankful and unholy, and makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Luke 6:35; Matthew 5:45). He preserves and supports all men in their beings, and so is the Saviour of all, and especially of them that believe, (1 Tim. 4:10) and gives them the necessaries of life, food and raiment, and all things richly to enjoy, both for convenience and pleasure: yea, even the devils themselves partake of mercy, in some sense; for though God has not spared them, so as to save them, and not condemn them; yet he has given them a kind of reprieve, and reserved them to the judgment of the great day; so that they are not yet in full torments, as their sins have deserved; and as God punishes none more but less than their sins require, this may be reasonably supposed to be the case of devils, even hereafter.

As to the special mercy of God, none are the objects of that but elect men, who are called "vessels of mercy", (Rom. 9:23) because they are filled with it, even with all spiritual blessings, which flow from it, and which are bestowed on them according as they are chosen in Christ, (Eph. 1:3, 4) and so particularly regeneration, which is according to the abundant mercy of God, they are favoured with, being the elect of God, (1 Peter 1:2, 3) and these, as they are redeemed by Christ, share in the special mercy and goodness of God; and therefore are under obligation to say, with wonder and thankfulness, "the Lord is good; his mercy endures for ever", (Ps. 107:1, 2) and especially, being effectually called by the grace of God, they appear to be the objects of mercy; then they who "had not obtained mercy", did not know their interest in it, nor actually enjoyed the blessings of it, "now have obtained mercy"; are blessed both with knowledge of interest in it, and with the open possession of the blessings of it (1 Peter 2:10). These are described sometimes by them "that call upon" the Lord, to whom he is plenteous in mercy, (Ps. 86:5) by "them that love him, and keep his commandments; to whom he shows his mercy", (Ex. 20:6; Neh. 1:5; Dan. 9:4) and by them that fear him, and towards whom his mercy always is (Ps. 103:11, 13, 17).

Not that calling upon God, love to him, and observance of his commands, and the fear of him, are the causes of his mercy to them, since that is prior to all these, and is the cause of them; but these describe the persons who openly, and manifestly, share in the mercy of God, and to whom the effects of it have been applied, and who may expect a continuance of it, and larger discoveries and displays thereof to be made unto them; as well as they show that the mercy of God is special and distinguishing, and yet that it is not limited to any family or nation, but is enjoyed by all that love and fear the Lord in every nation (Acts 10:34, 35).

III. The instances of mercy, to the objects of it, are many and various.

1. It appears in election: it is, indeed, a controversy among divines, whether election is an act of love or of mercy: I am inclined to be of the opinion of those who take it to be an act of love, and not mercy; as God chose literal Israel, because he loved them, (Deut. 7:7, 8) so spiritual Israel are first beloved, and then chosen, (2 Thess. 2:13) "electio praesupponit dilectionem"; but then, though the decree of election flows from love, and not mercy; yet God has in it decreed to show mercy; he has resolved within himself, saying, "I will have mercy, and will save"; and therefore in this decree he has appointed them not unto wrath, which they deserve, but to obtain salvation by Christ; which supposes them fallen creatures, and so objects of

mercy; for the decree of election may be distinguished into the decree of the end and the decree of the means: with respect to the end, the glory of God, men were considered as unfallen, in the pure mass out of which God designed to make them for himself: but with respect to the means, redemption by Christ, and faith in him, the Redeemer, and sanctification of the Spirit; here they were considered as fallen creatures; and so, with propriety, those chosen ones may be called vessels of mercy.

2. The covenant of grace is a display of the mercy of God, as before observed; it is built upon mercy, and built up with it; it is stored with it, and is full of it. Mercy called Christ to engage in it, and set him up as the Mediator of it, and came before him with the blessings of goodness: the provisions of Christ, as a Redeemer and Saviour in it; of forgiveness of sins through his blood; and of reconciliation and atonement by his sacrifice; and of regeneration and sanctification by his Spirit, are so many displays of mercy.

3. Redemption itself is a signal instance of the mercy of God. Mercy resolved upon the redemption and salvation of the elect; being viewed as fallen in Adam, and as sinners, mercy provided a Redeemer and Saviour of them, and laid their help upon him; mercy called Christ to undertake the work of redemption, and engaged him in it; mercy sent him, in the fulness of time, to visit them, and perform it; mercy delivered them up into the hands of justice and death, in order to obtain it, and it is most illustriously glorified in it; "mercy and truth have met together", (Ps. 85:10) yea, Christ himself, in his love and pity, has redeemed his people (Isa. 63:9).

4. The forgiveness of sin is another instance of the mercy of God, to which it is frequently ascribed (Ps. 51:1; Dan. 9:9; Luke 1:77, 78). God has promised it in covenant, as the effect of his mercy; "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness" (Heb. 8:12). He has set forth Christ, in his purposes, to be the propitiation for the remission of sins; and has sent him, in time, to shed his blood for it, (Rom. 3:25) and it is the mercy of God, which is the foundation of hope of it; and encourages sensible sinners to ask, and through which they obtain it (Ps. 103:8; Luke 18:13; 1 Tim. 1:13).

5. The mercy of God is displayed in regeneration, to which that is ascribed in (1 Peter 1:3) and it is wonderful and special mercy, to quicken a sinner dead in trespasses and sins; to enlighten such that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; to deliver from the bondage of Satan those, that are led captive by him at his will; to snatch them as brands out of the burning, and save from everlasting fire; to bring men out of a pit, wherein there was no water, no relief and comfort, and in which they must otherwise die; and to reveal Christ to them, and in them, the hope of glory; and give them a good hope, through grace, of being for ever happy. These are some of the great and good things which God does for his people in the effectual calling, having compassion on them.

6. Complete salvation, and eternal life itself, flow from the mercy of God; he saves, "not by works of righteousness, but according to his mercy", (Titus 3:5) and when he shall put his people into the full possession of salvation, then they shall find and obtain mercy in that day, even in the day of judgment, when they shall go into life eternal; and therefore are now directed to look unto the mercy of Christ for it, (2 Tim. 1:18; Jude 1:21).

Chapter 15

OF THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD.

The longsuffering of God, the same with his forbearance and patience, arises from his mercy, is a display of it, or is one way in which mercy shows itself; and so, by the Cabalistic Jews, it is said to belong to the predicament of "Chesed", or mercy, as they express themselves; and it may be observed, that wherever God is said to be longsuffering, he is represented as gracious and merciful, or as of great mercy and kindness; and by this attribute, as by them and with them, he is pleased to describe and make known himself, for the encouragement of faith and hope in him, (Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Ps. 86:15) and therefore the consideration of it very properly follows that of mercy. The Hebrew word D'SK "pX which literally signifies "long of both nostrils", is sometimes rendered "longsuffering", as in the places referred to; and sometimes "slow to anger", (Neh. 9:17; Ps. 103:8) and to which the Greek words paKpoGupeco, and paicpoGupia, in the New Testament, answer, (Rom. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9, 15) the allusion is to the nose, the seat of anger, which restrains or shows it, as it is long or

contracted.

God is sometimes called, "the God of patience", (Rom. 15:5) not only because he is the author and object of the grace of patience, and that is grateful to him; but because he is patient, or longsuffering in himself, and towards his creatures, and is a pattern of patience to them; for this is one of the attributes of God, in which he may in some measure be imitated (see Eph. 4:1,2 Col. 3:12). This is not to be considered as a quality, accident, passion, or affection in God, as in creatures; who bear with patience things grievous, distressing, and torturing to them, (Col. 1:11) but it is the very nature and essence of God, which is free from all passion and perturbation, from all suffering, grief, and pain; it springs from his goodness, and is as essential to him as that, and is joined with it, (Rom. 2:4) it is no other than a moderation of his anger, a restraint of that, a deferring the effects of it, at least for a while, according to his sovereign will; it is an extension and prolongation of mercy for a season; for mercy is always in it and with it; and in this it differs from it, that the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting; but the longsuffering of God, as to the exercise of it, is only for a time, until some certain end is answered, and in which it issues; either in the damnation and destruction of the wicked, when they are fitted for it, (Rom. 9:22) or in the salvation of God's elect, (2 Peter 3:15) for it is exercised towards both, till each take place; which will be distinctly considered.

1. The longsuffering of God is exercised towards his chosen people; they are the "us" towards whom he is said to be "longsuffering", (2 Peter 3:9) even who are called beloved, (2 Peter 3:8) not only beloved of the apostle, and by one another, but by the Lord; and the elect according to the foreknowledge of God, (1 Peter 1:2) for to the same persons are both epistles written; and therefore being the beloved and chosen of God, it was his will that none of them should perish, but come to repentance; even all of the same character, and of the same company and society, the whole election of grace; and until everyone of these are called and brought to repentance, God is, and will be, longsuffering towards them; and longsuffering to the world for their sakes; wherefore Christ's not coming to judgment sooner than he will, is not owing to any negligence, dilatoriness, or slackness in God, concerning the promise of it, but to the longsuffering of God; which has been eminently displayed with respect to the people of God.

1. In the saints of the Old Testament dispensation, which time is expressly called "the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:25). The case stood thus; Christ became the Surety for them in eternity, engaged to assume their nature, pay their debts, and make satisfaction for their sins: this was notified immediately after the fall of Adam, (Gen. 3:15) but it was four thousand years from thence to the time fixed in Daniel's prophecy, "to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness"; to the fulness of time when Christ should come to redeem all his people, and particularly, to obtain the redemption of transgressions that were under the first Testament, (Dan. 9:24; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 9:15). Now all this time was a time of patience, forbearance, and longsuffering with God, in respect to his people under this dispensation; he did not stir up his wrath, and execute it on them; but reserved it for his Son, their Surety; he forbore to inflict the punishment on them their sins deserved; he did not impute sin to them, place it to their account, charge it on them, and demand of them satisfaction for it; but placed it to his Son's account, and expected satisfaction from him: he accepted of the sacrifices of slain beasts, as vicarious ones in their stead, though they had no true value, nor real efficacy in them, to atone for sin; only were typical of Christ's sacrifice; and were to continue, and did, until that should be offered up; God waited till he should come and make his soul an offering for sin; and, upon his credit, bore with them, and bestowed the blessings of his grace on them: they were justified by him on the foundation of Christ's righteousness to be wrought out; and their sins pardoned, through his atoning sacrifice to be offered up; they were saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, even as we are, and we as they; they were carried to heaven, and glorified, before the payment of their debts were made by their Surety, before satisfaction for their sins was given to justice, and before the actual redemption of them was obtained. All which, as it shows the trust and confidence God put in his Son, so his forbearance and longsuffering towards Old Testament saints; which also has appeared, and does appear.

2. In and towards everyone of his people in their state of unregeneracy, in every age and period of time, or of whatsoever nation, or under whatsoever dispensation they be; the Lord bears with them, while in a state of nature, and waits patiently all that while, to be gracious to them (Isa. 30:18). There was much grace in his heart, in his Son, and in his covenant, laid up for them. This is abundantly displayed in conversion, when there is an abounding and a superabounding of it. But then the calling and conversion of them is according to purpose; and as there is a time for every purpose, for the execution of it, so for this; and till that time comes, the Lord waits, forbears, suffers much and long; he does not cut them off in their sins, as they deserve; but saves them, and sometimes from very imminent dangers, to be called, (2 Tim. 1:9) and with some he bears and waits a long time, who are called at the ninth and eleventh hours, and, as the thief on the cross, at the last day and hour of his life; and he waits, as it were, in a longing manner; speaking after the manner of men, "When will it once be?" (Jer. 13:27).

3. The apostle Paul is a remarkable instance of God's longsuffering; which was exercised towards him throughout all his blasphemy of Christ, his persecution of his people, and the injuries he did unto them; he waited, through all, to be gracious to him; his eye was upon him, and his heart was towards him; and hence such notice is taken of him in that state, before the account is given of his calling; (see Acts 7:58, 8:1, 3, 9:1) yea, he himself says, "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting", (1 Tim. 1:16) meaning the people of the Jews, in the latter day: his sense seems to be this, that as Christ bore much, and exercised great longsuffering towards him, and at last showed him mercy; so he would bear with, and show much longsuffering to the people of the Jews, of which that towards him was a pattern, and which should issue in their salvation, as it had in his; when "all Israel shall be saved", (Rom. 11:26) God's longsuffering towards them is very great and very remarkable; as it was towards him; though they are under the marks of his displeasure, he has not stirred up all his wrath, so as to cut them off from being a people; but has reserved them for future times, and good things for them, and waits to be gracious to them.

II. The longsuffering of God is exercised towards the ungodly, even towards "the vessels of wrath" whom he "endures with much longsuffering", till they are "fitted to destruction", (Rom. 9:22) and this appears by his supporting them in their beings, notwithstanding their grievous provocations of him; which are such, that it is amazing he does not at once strike them, dead, as he did Ananias and Sapphira; or that the earth does not open and swallow them up, as it did Dathan and Abiram. This can be attributed to nothing else but, to his patience, forbearance, and longsuffering: and by the multitude of his mercies bestowed upon them, who have many of them, more than other men; and which are called "the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering"; (see Job 21:7-13; Ps. 73:4-7; Rom. 2:4) and by granting to many of them the outward means of grace, which are despised and rejected by them; and by deferring his judgments on them; which, because they are not speedily executed, their hearts are set in them to do evil; they are more and more hardened, and promise themselves impunity in sin. Now the ends of God's thus dealing with them, are partly for his own glory; "to show his wrath, and make his power known"; to vindicate him from all cruelty and injustice, when he righteously executes his wrath, and exerts his power in their destruction: as in the instance of Pharaoh, (Rom. 9:17, 22) and partly for the sake of his own people who dwell among them, that they may not suffer with them; thus he would have spared Sodom, had there been ten righteous men in it, for their sakes: and he forbears to take vengeance on those that have shed the blood of his saints, until the number of his elect, in like manner, is fulfilled; and he spares a wicked world from being burnt up and destroyed, until all his chosen ones are brought to repentance, (Gen. 18:32; Rev. 6:11; 2 Peter 3:9) and another end is for their sakes, that they may be rendered inexcusable, and the execution of wrath on them at last, appear just and righteous (Rom. 2:1, 4, 5).

There are many instances of the patience, forbearance, and longsuffering of God, with respect to the wicked; as in the men of the old world, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah,

(1 Peter 3:20; see Gen. 6:3) and in the inhabitants of Sodom, daring sinners, who had first hints of God's displeasure, yet had mercy shown them, a respite for a while, and then destroyed by fire from heaven, (Gen. 13:13, 14:11, 21, 18:21, 19:24) in Pharaoh, refusing to let Israel go, whom God had spared some time, beginning with lighter judgments, then executed heavier ones; and at last drowned him, and his host, in the Red Sea, (Ex. 5:2,7 &c., Ex. 14:17, 18, 28) in the people of Israel, in the wilderness, whose manners God suffered and bore with, and was grieved with them forty years, (Acts 13:18) in the Amorites and Canaanites, until their sin was full, and till the land itself would bear them no longer; but spewed them out of it, (Gen. 15:16; Lev. 18:28) in the Gentile world, during their times of ignorance, (Acts 17:30) in fruitless professors of religion, signified by the barren fig tree, (Luke 13:6-9) and in antichrist, during the time of his reign, and no longer, (Rev. 2:21, 13:6, 18:8).

Chapter 16

OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

Having treated of the love, grace, mercy, and longsuffering of God, it will be proper to take some notice of his "goodness", from whence they all proceed; for that God loves any of his creatures, in the manner he does, bestows favours upon them, shows mercy to them, and bears much with them, is owing to the goodness of his nature.

Hence one of his names and titles by which he is described and made known, is, that of Good; "thou, Lord, art good", (Ps. 86:5) and in many other places; when God proclaimed his name before Moses, this was one part of it, "abundant in goodness" (Ex. 34:6). Philo says, God is the name of goodness. And our English word God seems to be a contraction of the word "Good"; or, however, is the same with the German "Gott" and "Godt"; which came, as it is thought, from the Arabic word "Gada", which so signified; so that the German and English name of the divine Being, in common use, is taken from the attribute of his goodness. The name the heathens give to their supreme deity, is "optimus", the "best"; he being not only good, as they supposed, and better than others, but the best of beings. Our Jehovah, the true God, is superlatively good; good in the highest degree, good beyond all conception and expression. Cotta in Cicero, charges Epicurus with taking away from God the property of the best and most excellent nature, by denying the grace and goodness of God; for what, says he, is better, or what is more excellent, than goodness and beneficence? It is a common notion, Sallustius says, that God is good; and Simplicius calls him, the Goodness of goodnesses. Concerning the goodness of God, let the following things be observed:

1. Goodness is essential to God; without which he would not be God; he, is by nature good. The evil god of Cerdon and Marcion is not the true God; and this goodness being wanting in heathen deities, whatever pretensions may be made unto it, excludes them from the claim of deity; yea, goodness is itself the nature and essence of God; as he is love itself, wisdom itself, &c. so he is goodness itself, and it is himself, it includes his whole nature and essence. When God promised Moses that he would make "all his goodness" pass before him, it was not a single attribute only which was proclaimed and made known; but the several attributes of mercy, grace, longsuffering, truth, faithfulness, justice, and holiness (Ex. 33:19, 34:6,7). The goodness of God is not distinct from his essence; for then he must be compounded of that, and his essence; which is contrary to his simplicity: he is good in and of himself, and by his own essence; and not by participation of another; for if he was not good of himself, and by his own essence, but of and by another; then there would be some being both better than him, and prior to him; and so he would not be the eternal God, nor an independent Being, since he must depend on that from whence he receives his goodness; nor would he be the most perfect being, since what communicates goodness to him must be more perfect than he: all which, to say of God, is very unbecoming. It remains, then, that he is essentially good; is so in and of himself, by his own nature and essence.

2. Goodness only belongs to God; he is solely good; "There is none good but one; that is, God"; is the assertion of Christ, (Matthew 19:17) which is to be understood not to the exclusion of the Son, and Spirit of God, who are, with the Father, the one God; and so equally good: but with respect to creatures, who are not of themselves inderivatively and independently good; this is only true of God. Whatever goodness is

in creatures, it is all from him, who made them good originally; or put into them, or bestowed upon them, what goodness they have: what goodness there is in the elect angels, who never sinned; what goodness was in Adam, in a state of innocence; what goodness is in any good man, who partakes of the grace of God, or is or will be in the saints in heaven, is all from God; every good and perfect gift comes from him; nor have creatures anything but what they receive from him; he is the source and fountain of all, and therefore all goodness, originally, ultimately, and solely, is to be referred to God.

3. God is the "summum bonum", he is t' ayaGov, as Plato calls him, "the Good"; the chiefest good; the sum and substance of all felicity. Unwearied have been the pursuits of men to attain this; but have always failed, when they place it or expect it in anything out of God, and short of him: innumerable have been the sentiments of men about it. Solomon seems to have reduced them to these three, wisdom, riches, and pleasure; and he made an experiment of them, what happiness could be enjoyed in them, as far as a king, a wise man, and a good man, could go; and when he had finished it, pronounced all "vanity and vexation of spirit". God only can make men happy; he is the Father of mercies, the Fountain of all goodness, the Source of all felicity. There may be a show of happiness in such and such outward circumstances of life, some may be in, with respect to the above things; but there is no solidity in them; he is the only "happy man whose God is the Lord", (Ps. 144:12-15) wherefore good men, who are sensible of the vanity of the creature, and all creature enjoyments, pant after him, and are importunately desirous of the enjoyment of him, and cannot be satisfied without him, placing all their happiness in him: while others are saying, "Who will show us any good?" taking up their contentment in worldly good; they say, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us"; which gives the greatest pleasure, joy, and satisfaction, that can be had (Ps. 4:6,7 52:1,73:25).

4. There is nothing but goodness in God, and nothing but goodness comes from him; there is no iniquity in him, nothing evil in his nature, no unrighteousness in any of his ways and works; he is "light" itself; all purity, holiness, truth, and goodness; "and in him is no darkness at all", of sin, error, and ignorance, (1 John 1:5) nor does anything that is evil come from him; he is not the author of sin, nor does he impel, nor persuade to it, nor tempt with it; but strongly forbids it, under pain of his displeasure, (James 1:13, 14) indeed, his decree is concerned about it; for it could not be, he not willing it by his permissive will; but then, though he suffers it to be, he overrules it for good; as in the case of the selling of Joseph, (Gen. 50:20) the evil of punishment of sin, or of affliction, is from God; in this sense "there is no evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it", (Amos 3:6) but then punishment of sin is a good, as it is a vindication of the honour of divine justice, and of the righteous law of God; and the affliction of the people of God is for their good; and all evil things of that kind work for their good, both here and hereafter.

5. God is infinitely good; as his understanding, wisdom, knowledge, and other perfections of his, are infinite; so is his goodness; he is abundant in it; it is so great, that it cannot be said how great it is; finite minds cannot comprehend it; the height, depth, length, and breadth of it, are unmeasurable; it knows no bounds nor limits; it is so perfect that nothing can be added to it: the goodness of a creature extends not to God, nor is it capable of communicating any to him, "who hath first given to him", &c. (Rom. 11:35, 36).

6. God is immutably and eternally good; the goodness of creatures is but as the morning cloud, and early dew, which soon passes away; of which there has been instances in angels and men: but the goodness of God is invariably the same, and endures continually; and though there has been, and are, such large communications of it to creatures, it is the same as ever, and remains an inexhaustible fountain.

7. The goodness of God is communicative and diffusive; he is good, and he does good; "the whole earth is full of his goodness", (Ps. 119:68, 33:5) there is not a creature but what partakes of it, more or less, in some manner or another; but then it is communicated according to his sovereign will and pleasure. A heathen writer argues the goodness of God from the existence of the world; since it is by the goodness of God the world is, God must be always good.

8. This attribute of goodness belongs to each divine person, Father, Son, and Spirit; when Christ says, as

quoted above, "there is none good but one, that is, God", it is to be understood not of God personally considered, or of one person, to the exclusion of the other; but of God essentially considered: and the design of Christ was, to raise the mind of the young man to whom he spoke, to an higher opinion of himself than what he had; even of him, not as a mere man, whom, as such, he called good; but as the true God, to whom this epithet, in its highest sense, only belongs: and it is predicated of the Father, (2 Chron. 30:18) of Christ, (John 10:11) and of the Spirit, (Neh. 9:20; Ps. 143:10) and they must, indeed, in the same sense, be good, since they partake of one common undivided nature and essence (1 John 5:7).

The goodness of God, with respect to each of the objects of it, may be considered as general and special; in like manner as his love and mercy. There is the general goodness of God, which is as extensive as his mercy; "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Ps. 145:9). All creatures are made by God, and as they came from him, they are all very good; there is a goodness put into them, whereby they become good and beneficial to others, and especially to men: there is a goodness in inanimate creatures, in the metals and minerals of the earth; in the luminaries of the heavens, the sun, moon, and stars; they are pleasant, good to look at, their form, magnitude, and splendour: they are profitably good; by their light they themselves are seen, and other objects; by this men see to walk and work, and do the several businesses of life; and through their kind and benign influences shed on the earth, many precious fruits are brought forth, and the advantages of them all men share in; God "makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good", (Matthew 5:45) which is one great instance of his general goodness. In the vegetable creation there is a large display of the goodness of God; some herbs, plants, and trees, being good for medicine, others for food, both for the cattle of the field and for the service of men (Ps. 104:14, 15). Among the animals, some are for one use, and some for another, and many are meat for men; and even every creature of God is good, and to be received with thanksgiving, (1 Tim. 4:4) and all creatures, both men and beast, partake of the goodness of God in the preservation of them, (Ps. 36:6; 1 Tim. 4:10) and in the provision of food for them (Ps. 104:27,28, 145:15, 16, 147:8; Acts 14:16, 17, 17:25, 28; 1 Tim. 4:8).

There is indeed a difference made by God in the distribution of his general goodness, in the effects of it; which are not imparted to all creatures alike. God gives more of his goodness to men than to brutes; since he gives them reason and understanding; whereby they become more knowing, and to be wiser than the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heavens, (Job 35:11) and angels have a greater share of his goodness than men; who excel as in strength, so in wisdom and knowledge; hence man is said to be made a little lower than the angels, (Ps. 8:5) and some men have a greater share in the general and providential goodness of God than others; either have larger endowments of mind, are the wise and prudent of the world; or have more comeliness, strength, and health of body; or are possessed of greater wealth and riches (Eccl. 9:11).

The special goodness of God, as to the effects of it, elect angels, and elect men, only partake of, which is sovereign and distinguishing; God is good to the elect angels, in choosing them in Christ, preserving them from apostasy, confirming them in the estate they were created in, granting them nearness to himself, and many other peculiar favours; when the angels that sinned are not spared by him, but are reserved to judgment (1 Tim. 5:21; 2 Peter 2:4). Elect men, the spiritual and mystical Israel of God, have a share in his special goodness; "truly God is good to Israel", (Ps. 73:1) and that in a very distinguishing manner, as he is not to reprobates; "the election hath obtained" all the special blessings of goodness, grace here, and glory hereafter; light, life, and happiness; while "the rest" are "blinded", (Rom. 11:7) they are made to differ from others thereby in time, and to all eternity; and yet among them there are different displays of divine goodness in the present state; some have greater spiritual gifts for usefulness than others; some have larger measures of grace; though they have all the same grace, yet not to the same degree; they have all alike precious faith, but in some it is weaker, in others stronger; and some have more spiritual light in the Gospel, and more spiritual peace and joy, and larger discoveries of the love of God, and have more communion with him. All which must be referred to his sovereign good will and pleasure.

Many are the acts and instances of divine goodness to the people of God in common. It has been observed, that the attribute of "goodness", and the epithet of "good", belong to each of the three divine persons, Father, Son, and Spirit; and they have each of them manifested their goodness in acts of it.

Jehovah the Father, has displayed his goodness to his special people, in his good designs towards them, and thoughts of them; in setting them apart for himself, his own glory, and their good; in laying up all good things for them in Christ, and in the covenant of his grace; in making promises of good things to them, both for this life, and that which is to come; and in bestowing good gifts on them, the gift of himself, the gift of his Son, and the gift of his Spirit; and all the blessings of goodness, as of adoption, justification, pardon of sin, &c. and all the graces of the Spirit, as the gift of faith, of repentance, of a good hope of eternal life, and also the gift of eternal life itself. Jehovah the Son, has manifested his goodness to the same persons; in becoming a Surety, and undertaking for their good; in partaking of their nature, in which good will to men was expressed; and in working out the great and good work of their redemption and salvation; he is the good Shepherd, and has shown himself to be so, by laying down his life for the sheep, and by providing a good fold, and good pasture for them: he is, and has been, in all ages, the Fountain of goodness and grace to all his people, for the supply of all their wants; and he ever lives to speak a good word, and intercede for good things for them. Jehovah the Spirit, is good unto them, as a Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter of them, as a Spirit of adoption, grace, and supplication; as the author of the good work of grace in them; as the guide of them through this world; and as the earnest and pledge of their future glory, and a sealer of them up unto the day of redemption.

Chapter 17

OF THE ANGER AND WRATH OF GOD.

Besides the love and kindness of God, his grace, favour, and good will, his mercy, pity, and compassion; and his longsuffering and forbearance; which flow from the goodness of his nature; there are other things to be considered, which may come under the notion of affections; as anger, wrath, hatred, &c. The anger and wrath of God are often used promiscuously in Scripture, to signify the same thing, and yet they sometimes seem to be distinct; and according to our notion of them, as in men, they may be distinguished: anger is a lower and lesser degree of wrath, and wrath is the height of anger; and accordingly I shall distinctly consider them, as in God.

1. The Anger of God. And shall, first, show that it belongs to God; and in what sense, and on what account. And, secondly, with whom he is angry; or on whom his anger is exercised.

First, That Anger belongs to God, or may be predicated of him. This is denied by some philosophers of the Cynic and Stoic sects, because it is a passion; they allow grace, good will, and beneficence in God to men, but not anger; this they suppose to be a weakness, and even a sort of madness, and what is unbecoming a wise and good man, and much more unbecoming Deity. The Epicureans deny that either is in God; neither favour and good will, nor anger and wrath; for they imagine he has no concern in the affairs of men, and neither regards their good actions, nor their bad ones; and so is neither pleased nor displeased with them; and is neither kind and favourable to them; nor is angry with them, nor resents what is done by them. But the scriptures everywhere ascribe anger to God; and often speak of it, as being kindled against particular persons, and against whole bodies of men; and give many particular instances of it: to produce the whole proof of this, would be to transcribe a great part of the Bible. But then anger is to be considered not as a passion, or affection in God, as it is in men; and especially as it may be defined from the etymology of the Latin word for it "ira", as given by a learned grammarian, deriving it from "ire", "to go"; as if a man, when in anger, goes out of himself; and when he lays it down, returns to himself again; this cannot, in any sense, be ascribed to God: rather it may be, as if it was "ura", and so is "ab urendo", from burning; or rather from the Hebrew word mil which signifies to burn; and the anger of God is compared to fire in Scripture, and is often said to be kindled; but then we are not to imagine, when God is said to be angry, that there is any commotion or perturbation in God's mind; that he is ruffled and discomposed, or that there is any

pain or uneasiness in him, as in human minds; so it may be in finite created spirits, but not in an infinite and uncreated one, as God is: and much less is this to be considered as a criminal passion in him, as it too often is in men; for God is a pure and holy being; without iniquity: besides, there may be anger in men without sin; we are exhorted to be angry and sin not, (Eph. 4:26) and it is certain there was anger in the human nature of Christ, in whom there was no sin, nor was he conscious of any, (Mark 3:5) and so there may be in the divine mind, without an imputation of weakness or sin. Anger in God is no other than a disgust with sin, and with sinners, on account of it; it is often said in Scripture, that such and such a thing displeased him, or was evil, and not right in his sight (Num. 11:1; 2 Sam. 11:27; Ps. 60:1; Isa. 59:15). All sin is displeasing to God; he cannot take any pleasure in it, nor look upon it with delight; it is so contrary to his nature, and repugnant to his will, he cannot but have an aversion to it, and an abhorrence of it; and there are some sins more especially which provoke him to anger; as the sins against the first table of the law, particularly idolatry; which, of all sins, is the most provoking to him: since it strikes at his very being, and robs him of his glory; see (Deut. 32:16, 21; Judg. 2:12, 13; 1 King 16:33). Likewise distrust of the power and providence of God, murmuring at it, and complaining of it; which was often the case of the Israelites; and by which they provoked the Lord to anger; so perjury, false swearing, the taking of the name of God in vain, and blasphemy of it; profanation of the Lord's day, and neglect of his word, worship, and ordinances: and not these only, but sins against the second table of the law, are highly displeasing to God, and resented by him; as disobedience to parents, murder, adultery, theft, false witness, covetousness, and every evil thing (see Isa. 5:24, 25). Now "who knoweth the power of God's anger?" (Ps. 90:11) nothing can resist it, nor stand before it; not rocks and mountains, which are overturned and cast down by it; nor the mightiest monarchs, nor the proudest mortals, nor the stoutest and adamantine hearts; none can stand before God when once he is angry, (Job 9:5, 13; Ps. 76:7; Nah. 1:6).

Ib. Secondly, The objects of the anger of God, or on whom it is exercised. "God is angry with the wicked every day", (Ps. 7:11) because they are daily sinning against him; their whole lives are one continued series and course of wickedness; all they do is sin; their very actions in civil life, the ploughing of the wicked, is sin; and all their religious services are but "splendida peccata", "shining sins", and so are displeasing to God, and resented by him; their sacrifices, brought with a wicked mind, without a right principle, and a right end, are an abomination to him, (Prov. 21:4, 27) being in the flesh, in an unregenerate state, they cannot please God, nor do the things which are pleasing in his sight; being destitute of the grace of God, and particularly of faith; "without which it is impossible to please him." These, though God is angry with them continually, yet they do not always appear under the visible and public tokens of his resentment; the "rod of God" is not on them; nor are they in trouble, as other men, and have more than heart can wish; oftentimes their families, flocks, and herds, increase; and they spend their days in health, wealth, and pleasure, (Job 21:7-13; Ps. 73:3-12) and seem as if they were the favourites of heaven, and think themselves to be such. But though God is slow to anger, as he is often described, moves slowly to express his anger; yet he will most certainly do it in the issue of things; and though men may promise themselves impunity in sin, and fancy they shall have peace when they walk after the imagination of their evil hearts, and add sin to sin; yet at length God will not spare them; but his anger and jealousy shall smoke against them, and all the curses written in the law shall come upon them, (Deut. 29:19, 20).

Moreover, God is angry with his own special people, holy and good men; we read of his anger being kindled against Aaron and Miriam, for speaking against Moses; and against Moses and Aaron, for not sanctifying him before the children of Israel; insomuch that neither of them were admitted to enter the land of Canaan; and against David, Solomon, and others, for sins committed by them. And this is not at all inconsistent with the love of God unto them: anger is not opposite to love; there may be anger in the nearest and dearest relatives; and where there is the most affectionate regard to each other: the anger of Jacob was kindled against his beloved Rachel; a father may be angry with his son, and chastise him for a fault, and yet dearly love him; and a son may be angry with a father, as Jonathan was with Saul, yet bear a

true filial affection for him. God loves his people with an everlasting and unchangeable love, and never alters and varies in it; and yet may be angry, that is, displeased with them, and show his resentment at sin committed by them, by his chastisement of them, and still continue his love to them; for even that is done in love. Besides, the anger of God towards them, is often only in their sense and apprehension of it; when God goes forth towards them, in some dispensations of his, which are not agreeable to them, they conclude he is angry with them; and when these dispensations are varied, then they suppose his anger is turned away from them, (Isa. 12:1) so when he hides his face from them, and unbelief prevails, they interpret it, putting them away in anger, and shutting up his tender mercies in anger, (Ps. 27:9, 77:9) when he seems to turn a deaf ear to their prayers, and does not give an immediate answer to them; this they call being angry against the prayer of his people, (Ps. 80:4) and when he afflicts them, in one way or another, then they apprehend he comes forth in anger against them; and "they have no soundness in their flesh, because of his anger; nor rest in their bones, because of their sins", (Ps. 38:3) but when he takes off his afflicting hand, grants his gracious presence, and manifests his pardoning love and grace, then they conclude he has turned himself from the fierceness of his anger (Ps. 85:2, 3). Now this apparent anger, or appearance of anger, "endures but for a moment", (Ps. 30:5) a very short space of time indeed; though God hides his face from his people, and chides them for their sins: yet he does not keep anger for ever: this is the criterion by which he is distinguished from other gods, in that he retains not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy, (Ps. 103:9; Mic. 7:18) and in this the anger of God towards his people, differs from his anger to wicked men, since the one is but for a moment, and the other is continual.

II. The Wrath of God is the heat of his great anger, (Deut. 29:24) it is his anger not only kindled and incensed, but blown up into a flame; it is the "indignation" of his anger, the "fury" and "fierceness" of it, (Isa. 30:30, 42:25; Hosea 11:9) and it seems to be no other than his punitive justice, and includes his will to punish sinners according to the demerit of their sins in strict justice; his threatenings to do it, and the actual execution of it; which is the vengeance that belongs to him, and he will recompense; even his vindictive wrath, or vengeful judgment; "What if God willing to show his wrath", &c.? (Rom. 9:22). Now the wrath of God may be considered,

1. As temporary, or what is executed in the present life; of which there have been many instances and examples, and there will be more; and a brief review of them will give a more enlarged idea of the wrath of God. Not to take notice of the apostate angels, whom God has cast down to hell; where, though they may not be in full torment, yet are dreadful instances of the wrath of God against sin; since not one of them have been spared, or have shared in pardoning grace and mercy. I shall only observe what examples of it have been, or will be, among men. The first instance of it is in the condemnation of Adam, and all his posterity, for the first sin, and for only one single sin of his. How great must that sin be! what sinfulness must there be in it! how greatly must the divine Being be incensed by it! in that, for it, he has caused death, that is, his wrath to pass in judgment on him, and all his offspring; so that, in consequence of it, all the children of Adam are the children of God's wrath. The next is the drowning of the old world, when full of violence and corruption; so that God repented he had made man in it, and it grieved him to the heart; and in his wrath he determined to destroy man and beast in it; and which he did, by bringing a flood on the world of the ungodly. Then follows another, though not so general; but limited and restrained to a part of the world; the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and others of the plain; whose inhabitants being notorious sinners, provoked the eyes of God's glory to such a degree, that he rained fire and brimstone from heaven upon them; and set them as an example and emblem of mens' suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. The plagues inflicted on the Egyptians, for not letting Israel go, when demanded of them, is another instance of the wrath of God; for by inflicting these on them, he not only made a way to his anger, to show it forth, as the Psalmist says; but, as he also observes, "he cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, indignation, and trouble", (Ps. 78:49, 50). The children of Israel themselves often provoked the Lord to wrath; and brought it down upon them, for their sins; as at Horeb, when they made the calf; at Taberah, Massah,

and Kibrothhattaavah, where they murmured against the Lord, (Deut. 9:8, 19, 22) as they did likewise at the report of the spies, concerning the land of Canaan; when "God swore in his wrath, they should not enter into his rest." And again, upon the affair of Korah, and his accomplices, when wrath went forth from the Lord, and the plague began, (Num. 14:23, 16:46). Witness, also, each of their captivities; particularly their captivity in Babylon, through their mocking at, and misuse of the prophets of the Lord; so that wrath arose against them; and there was no remedy; and their last captivity, and destruction, by the Romans; when wrath came upon them to the uttermost; and under which wrath, and in which captivity they are to this day. Whenever the four sore judgments of God, the sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts, have been exercised in the world, as they often have been; they are always in wrath; and these with earthquakes, and such like uncommon events, are presignifications, and foretokens of greater wrath yet to come; and in a little while, the seven vials full of the wrath of God, will be poured forth on antichrist, and on the antichristian states; and the judgment of God will come on Babylon in one day. And when the end of all things is come, the earth, and all in it will be burnt with fire, and the heavens melt away with fervent heat; the day of the Lord will burn like an oven, and the wicked, like stubble, will be burnt up by it, and will have neither root nor branch left: all which will be expressive of the great wrath of God. But there is no greater instance of it, or what more fully demonstrates it, than what our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and endured as the Surety of his people, in their room and stead; when, their sins being imputed to him, were found on him, and he was stricken for them; the sword of justice was sheathed in him; the vindictive wrath of God was poured forth upon him, to the uttermost of the demerit of sin; God spared him not: how inconceivably great must his wrath be against sin, when God spared not in the least his own dearly beloved Son, but suffered him to be put to the most exquisite pain, both in body and soul, for the sins of his people!

2. There is the wrath of God that is yet to come: the Scriptures speak of future wrath; wrath that will take place in the life which is to come; which in part, commences at the death of wicked men; and will be complete at their resurrection from the dead (Matthew 3:7; 1 Thess. 1:10). This is expressed by fire, than which nothing is more intolerable; even devouring fire and everlasting burnings, not to be endured; this is no other than the curse of the law that is broken; which not only reaches to this life, but to that which is to come; it is the same with the second death; which lies in a separation from God, and, in a sense of his hot displeasure; it is called hell and hell fire; the word for which, in the New Testament, is taken from Gehinnom, or the valley of Hinnom; where the Jews burnt their children in sacrifice to Molech; and which place, from the beating of drums in it, that the shrieks of the children might not be heard by their parents, was called Tophet; of which the prophet says, as an emblem of hell fire, or the fire of divine wrath; "Tophet is ordained of old-the pile thereof is fire, and much wood: the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it", (Isa. 30:33) which is an awful representation of the wrath of God. And by whatsoever term this state of wrath is expressed, it is always spoken of as what will continue for ever: it is called everlasting fire, everlasting punishment, everlasting destruction, "the smoke of torment, that ascends for ever and ever"; and for the commencement of which, in its full extent, there is a day fixed, called, "the day of wrath, and righteous judgment of God"; until which time God reserves wrath for his adversaries; it is laid up in store with him, among his treasures, and will be ever laying out, and pouring forth.

As to the objects of this wrath, seeing it is revealed against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men; it lies against all that are unrighteous and ungodly; and as all have sinned, and are under sin, all are "children of wrath", (Eph. 2:3; Rom. 1:18, 3:9, 23) but there are some particularly described, on whom this wrath comes, and they are called "children of disobedience", (Eph. 5:5, 6; Col. 3:5, 6) such who are disobedient to the light of nature, rebel against it, and hold truth in unrighteousness, which that discovers; and so as they sin without law, they perish without law, (Rom. 1:18, 19, 21, 28, 2:12) and who also are disobedient to the law of God, break it, and are convicted by it, as transgressors, whom it pronounces guilty, and is the ministration of condemnation and death unto

them; and who are disobedient to the gospel of Christ, obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, and are slaves to their sinful lusts and pleasures; on these come indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish; even on every soul of man that does evil, (2 Thess. 1:8; Rom. 2:8, 9) they are also represented as unbelievers: "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him": he that does not believe that Christ is the Son of God, that he is the Messiah and Saviour of men, the sentence of wrath, which the law has passed on him, as a transgressor of that, remains; and since he denies divine revelation, rejects the gospel scheme, and disbelieves Christ as a Saviour, and salvation by him, there is no help for him; wrath is on him, and that without remedy, it must abide: now it is not any sort of unbelief for which this wrath is, and abides; not for that which is through the want of the means of faith, such as in heathens; for "how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10:14, 17) nor which is through the want of the special grace of faith, which is the gift of God, and peculiar to his elect, and which he only can give, and yet denies it; and which, without his grace vouchsafed, they can never have: but it is the disbelief of the report of the gospel, by such who have the opportunity of reading and hearing it, and yet either attend not to the evidence of it; or, notwithstanding that, reject it; they receive not the record God has given of his Son, and so make him a liar, than which nothing is more provoking to wrath (1 John 5:10). This was the case of the Jews of old, (John 3:19) and is of the deists of the present age. In short, the wrath of God comes upon men either for their sins against the light of nature, or against the law of God, or against the gospel of Christ.

There are some on whom no wrath comes here, nor hereafter; who are the vessels of mercy, afore prepared for glory: concerning whom Jehovah says, "fury is not in me"; and to whom he is all love, "love" itself, (Isa. 27:4; 1 John 4:16) being sinners indeed, and transgressors of the law of God, they are children of wrath as others, (Eph. 2:3) which phrase not only means that they are serving of wrath, but that, as they are sinners, they are found guilty of it; and not only found guilty, but are condemned unto it; they are really under the sentence of wrath, condemnation, and death; they are obnoxious to the curse of the law, which is no other than the wrath of God; they are liable to it, and in danger of it; and being so near it, how is it that they escape it, and are secured from it? They are secured from it by the decree of God, who has appointed them not to wrath, but to obtain salvation, (1 Thess. 5:9) which decree is unfrustrable by the oath of God, who has swore that he will not be wrath with them, (Isa. 54:9) which is immutable: by the suretyship engagements of Christ for them, to bear it in their room; and till that was done, God forbore to execute the sentence; called the forbearance of God, (Rom. 3:25) by Christ's actually bearing the chastisement of their peace; by being made a curse for them, and enduring the wrath of God in their room; whereby he delivered them from wrath to come, (Ps. 89:38; 1 Thess. 5:10) and by his righteousness imputed to them, through which, being justified, they are saved from wrath, (Rom. 5:9) though even these persons may have, at times, some apprehensions of the wrath of God; as, particularly, under first awakenings, and convictions of sin; when the law works a sense of wrath in them, and leaves in them a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation; when they flee to Christ, from wrath to come, and say, "Lord, save us, or we perish"; and afterwards, when under the hiding of God's face, or his afflicting hand is upon them, they imagine that the wrath of God lies hard upon them, and his fierce wrath goes over them, (Ps. 88:7, 16; Lam. 3:1) but in reality, there is no wrath comes upon them now; their afflictions and chastisements are all in love; and there will be no curse hereafter; but they shall always see the face of God, and be "in his presence, where are fuliness of joy, and pleasures for evermore" (Rev. 3:19, 22:3, 4).

Chapter 18

OF THE HATRED OF GOD.

There are some[l] that deny that hatred belongs to God; or that he hates anything; and urge a passage in the Apocrypha, "Thou lovest all beings, and hatest none of these that thou hast made; " (Wisdom 11:24) which is true of the creatures of God, as such; for as they are made by him they are all very good; and are loved, delighted in, and not hated by him. Nor is hatred to be considered as a passion in him, as it is in

men; who is a pure, active Spirit, and is solely agent, and not a patient; is not capable of suffering anything: much less as it is a criminal passion, by which men, in their worst estate, are described, "hateful", and "hating one another", (Titus 3:3) since he is a perfectly holy Being, and without iniquity. Yet the scriptures do, in many places, attribute to him hatred both of persons and things, (Ps. 5:5; Zech. 8:17) and most truly and rightly; and this may be concluded from love being in God, as has been shown; though this is made use of as an argument against it, because opposite to it; but where there is love of any person or thing, there will be an hatred of that which is contrary to the object loved: thus good men, as they love those that are good, like themselves, and good things, so they hate that which is evil; they love God, the chiefest good; and they hate sin, the chiefest evil, as diametrically opposite to him, (Ps. 97:10; Amos 5:15). So the righteous Lord, as he loves righteousness and righteous men, his people; as they are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and found in the ways of righteousness, so he hates unrighteousness, and unrighteous men; for to the Son of God he saith, "thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows", (Ps. 45:7) besides, it is a virtue, yea grace, in good men, to hate sin that dwells in them, and is committed by them, as the apostle did, (Rom. 7:15) for without the grace of God it is not hated; and also to hate them that hate the Lord, as David did, and for the truth of which he appeals to God, "Do not I hate them, O Lord that hate thee? I hate them with perfect hatred" (Ps. 139:21, 22). Now if it is a virtue, or owing to the grace of God in them, that they do hate sin and sinners, then this must come from God, from whom all grace, and every good gift comes; and consequently must be in him, in a higher degree, even in the most perfect manner; to all which may be added, that hatred, when ascribed to God, sometimes signifies no other than his will to punish sin and sinners, and his execution of it, (Ps. 5:5, 6) and so is an act of justice, of punitive justice; "And is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance?" No; he is righteous in that, as he is in all his works (Rom. 3:5). For the further illustration of this point, I shall consider both what that is; and who they are God is said to hate.

1. What that is he hates, that is sin; and this is consistent with his not hating any of his creatures; for sin is no creature of his; he is not the author of sin; all the creatures he made were very good; but sin was not among them; every creature of God is good, and not to be refused, rejected, and hated by men; as none are by God, as such; but sin is not any of them. Sin must be hateful to God, since it is so contrary to his nature, to his will, and to his righteous law. All sin is an abomination to him; but there are some sins that are particularly observed as hated by him, as idolatry, (Deut. 16:22; Jer. 44:3-5) perjury, (Zech. 8:17) all insincere and hypocritical acts of worship, (Isa. 1:14, 15; Amos 5:21) sins against the two tables of the law; as murder, which stands among the six things which God hates, (Prov. 6:16-18) fornication, adultery, community of wives; the deeds of the Nicolaitans he is said to hate, (Rev. 2:6, 15) theft, robbery, rapine, and violence of every sort; all kind of injury to the persons and properties of men, (Ps. 11:5; Isa. 61:8) and every evil thing a man may imagine against his neighbour (Zech. 8:17). And all this is true of each of the divine persons. God the Father has shown his hatred of sin by the judgments he has executed in casting down from heaven to hell the angels that sinned, driving Adam and Eve out of paradise, bringing a flood upon the world of the ungodly, raining fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah; with other instances in following ages, and later ones; and by the chastisements of his own people, when they sin and transgress his law; but in nothing more than by the condemnation of sin in the flesh of Christ, when he suffered in the room and stead of his people, as their Surety and Saviour; and so by the punishment of wicked men to all eternity. The Son of God has given sufficient proof of his loving righteousness, and hating iniquity, of whom these things are expressly said, (Ps. 45:7; Heb. 1:8, 9) and are true of him as a divine person, and as Mediator, and as man; and this he has done by inveighing against the sins of the Jews in his time; by his severe usage of the buyers and sellers in the temple; and by his exhortations and threatenings to men to sin no more, lest worse things came unto them: and the Holy Ghost is not only grieved by the sinful actions and behaviour of men; but may be vexed by them, so as to turn to be their enemy, and fight against them (Isa. 63:10).

Which leads me to consider,

2. Who they are that God hates; and they are sinners, "workers of iniquity", (Ps. 5:5) not men, as men, but as sinful men; and not all that sin, or have sin in them; for then all would be hated, for all have sinned in Adam, and by; actual transgressions; and none, even the best of men, are without it, (Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8) but "workers" of it, traders in it, whose whole lives are one continued series of sinning; to those it will be said, I "never knew you"; I never loved you, I always hated you; "depart from me, ye that work iniquity", (Matthew 7:23), make a trade of it; make it the business of their lives, continually and constantly commit it, (John 8:34; 1 John 3:8, 9) and God is impartial, he hates "all the workers of iniquity; and brings down his indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man that does evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" (Rom. 2:8, 9). The scriptures speak of an hatred of some persons antecedent to sin, and without the consideration of it; which, though it may be attended with some difficulty to account for; yet may be understood in a good sense, and consistent with the perfections of God, and with what has been said of his hatred of sin and sinners; for thus it is said of Jacob and Esau, personally considered; "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated", (Mai. 1:2) and which was before the one had done any good, or the other done any evil; as the apostle expressly says, (Rom. 9:11-13). "The children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil; that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand; not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her", to Rebekah, the mother of them, while they were in her womb, "the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated". And what is said of these, is true of all the objects of election and non-election. And now let it be observed, that this hatred is to be understood, not of any positive hatred in the heart of God towards them, but of a negative and comparative hatred of them; that whereas while some are chosen of God, and preferred by him, and are appointed to obtain grace and glory, and to be brought to great dignity and honour; others are passed by, neglected, postponed, and set less by; which is called an hatred of them; that is, a comparative one, in comparison of the love shown, and the preference given to others; in this sense the word is used in (Luke 14:26). "If any man hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple": the meaning of which cannot be, that a man must have positive hatred of such near relations, and of his own life; but that he should be negligent of these in comparison of Christ; postpone them to him, set less by them, have a less affection for them than him, and so prefer him unto them; in like sense are we to understand the above expression concerning Esau, and all reprobates: and that this may appear yet clear, it should be observed, that in this business there are two acts of the divine will; the one is a will not to bestow benefits of special goodness; not to give grace, nor to raise to honour and glory: and this God may do antecedent to, and without any consideration of sin; but act according to his sovereign will and pleasure, since he is under no obligation to confer benefits, but may bestow them on whom he pleases; as he himself says, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" (Matthew 20:15). The other act of the divine will is, to inflict evil; and that is always for sin, and in consideration of it; for though sin is not the cause of the act of the will, it is the cause of the thing willed, which is not willed without the consideration of it; they are the wicked God has made, or appointed to the day of evil, and no other; ungodly men, whom he has foreordained to that condemnation, vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction by sin; on whom it is the will of God to show his wrath, and make his power known (Prov. 16:4; Jude 1:4; Rom. 9:22). In the one act, hatred, or a denial of grace, is without the consideration of sin; in the other, hatred, or a will to punish, is with it; punishment being only willed for it: but then God never hates his elect in any sense; they are always loved by him; to which hatred is opposite: he may be angry with them, and chastise them for their sins; yea, he may, as he says, and as they apprehend, in a little wrath hide his "face" from them; but he never hates them; though he hates their sins, and shows his resentment at them, he still loves them freely; renews, and raises them up by repentance, when fallen into sin, and manifests and applies his pardoning grace to them, and never bears any hatred to their persons.

Chapter 19

OF THE JOY OF GOD.

Joy, which is often attributed to God in the scriptures, bears some resemblance to the affection of joy in men; but is, by some philosophers, denied of him; and, indeed, is not to be considered as a passion in him, as in them; and particularly, when in its height, or at an excess; as it is a transport of the mind, and carries it out of, and beyond itself, as it were; as in the cases of Jacob, when the news of his son Joseph's being alive were brought him; and of the disciples, when they heard of the resurrection of Christ, believed not for joy: and, indeed, all affections that are ascribed to God, are ascribed to him, not as in themselves, but as to their effects; such and such effects being done by men, when so and so affected. Hence when similar ones are done by God, the like affections are ascribed to him; and this of joy is expressed by him in very different effects; as in inflicting punishment, as well as in conferring benefits; in the one he rejoices in the glory of his justice and holiness; and in the other, in the displays of his grace and goodness (see Deut. 28:63). Though joy, as ascribed to God, seems to be no other than delight and complacency in persons and things; so some philosophers and schoolmen make them to be the same; or, however, take joy to be a species of delight; only they observe a difference, with respect to brute animals, in whom there is delight, but not joy; it is also made a question with them whether delight is a passion? but my business with it is only as it concerns God, and is predicated of him; and who may be said,

1. To rejoice and take delight and complacency in himself, in his own nature, and the perfections of it; in which there is an all-sufficiency, and so a fulness of content and satisfaction; and he rests infinitely well pleased in himself. Hence Aquinas, who defines joy and delight a certain quietation, or rest of the will, in what is willed by it; observes, that God must greatly rest quiet and satisfied in himself, which is his principal "volitum", or what is willed by him, as having all-sufficiency in him, and therefore by his own will greatly rejoices and delights in himself: and though he makes joy and delight in some respect to differ; delight flowing from a good really conjoined; and joy being not only of that, but of something exterior; hence, he says, it is plain God properly delights in himself; but rejoices in himself and others. Song the Jews interpret (1 Chron. 16:27) "gladness in his place", of joy in himself.

2. He rejoices and takes delight and complacency in his works (Ps. 104:31). In the works of creation, which, when he had finished, he not only rested from them, but rested in them, with delight and pleasure; he looked them over, and pronounced them all very good; and he still appears to have pleasure in them, by his continuance of them in being, by upholding all things by the word of his power: he rejoices and delights in the works of his providence, in which he is always concerned (John 5:17).

These, so far as they are known by men, yield an unspeakable delight and pleasure in the contemplation of them; and especially when they will be manifest; and though they are now, many of them, unsearchable and past finding out, yet there is a depth of riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God in them; but what delight must God take in them, being all according to his sovereign will and pleasure; by whom they are seen and known in their beauty, harmony, and connection; and the springs and causes of them, and the several ends answered by them? God rejoices and takes delight particularly in the great work of redemption, contrived by his infinite wisdom, and wrought out by his Son; partly because of his own glory displayed therein; as of his love, grace, and mercy, so of his truth and faithfulness, holiness and justice; and partly because of the salvation of his people, secured thereby; a thing his heart was set upon from everlasting; what he resolved should be, and what he appointed them to: he rejoices and delights in his work of grace on the hearts of his people: this is their beauty, even the beauty of holiness, which he, the king, greatly desires; by which they are all glorious within, and well pleasing in his sight; he delights in the graces which he himself, by his Spirit, has wrought in them, and in the exercise of those graces, as drawn forth by him, their faith, hope, love, fear, &c. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy" (Ps. 147:11; Song 4:9, 10). And so all his people, as they are his workmanship, his poem, curiously wrought by him; the works of his hands, in whom, and whereby he is glorified; he rejoices in them, and blesses on account of them (Isa. 19:25, 60:21). Wherefore,

3. He may be truly said to rejoice, delight, and take pleasure in his people, as he often is; they are his Hephzibah, in whom he delights; his Beulah, to whom he is married; and therefore, as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so does the Lord rejoice over them, (Ps. 149:4; Isa. 62:4, 5) not in all men; for there are some in whom he has no joy, vessels in whom he has no delight and pleasure, (Isa. 9:17, 27:11; Mai. 1:10) but his special covenant people, (Jer. 32:38-41) and these not as creatures, and still less as sinful creatures, either as considered in Adam, or in themselves, guilty and defiled; but as in Christ, in whom God is well pleased, and in all that are in him, as chosen in him, and given to him; so God the Father rejoiced in them from everlasting; for as his love to them, so his joy in them, is so early, it being a love of complacency and delight; and of which joy there are new expressions in conversion (see Luke 15:7, 9, 22-24). And likewise the Son of God, was from all eternity rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth; and his delights were with the sons of men, (Prov. 8:31) and which joy he felt under all his sorrows and sufferings, when working out their salvation, (Heb. 12:2) and which he expresses at their conversion; that being the time of finding his lost people; and, indeed, the day of his open espousals to them, and so of the gladness of his heart, (Luke 15:3-5; Song 3:11) and they will also be his joy, and crown of rejoicing, in the last day; when they shall be introduced into his presence, not only with joy and gladness in themselves, but with it in him, who will present them before his Father and himself, with exceeding joy, (Ps. 45:13, 14; Jude 1:24) and this joy over them, both in him and his divine Father, is to do them good, and issues in it; to bestow benefits upon them, grace here, and glory hereafter; to beautify them with salvation; to make them prosperous, especially in spiritual things, in which prosperity he takes pleasure; and in making all things work together for their good, (Jer. 32:41; Ps. 149:4; 35:27) which joy is full; there is a redundancy, an overflow of it; it is hearty and sincere, is the strength and security of the saints, and will remain for ever (Neh. 8:10; Zeph. 3:17).

Chapter 20

OF THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

Having considered those attributes of God which bear a likeness to affections in men; I proceed to consider those which in them may be called virtues; as holiness, justice, or righteousness, truth, or faithfulness; and shall begin with the holiness of God. And,

First, show that it is in God, and belongs to him, and what it is. The scriptures most abundantly ascribe it to him; he is very frequently called "holy", and "the Holy One"; this title he takes to himself, (Isa. 40:25; Hoses 11:9) and is often given him by others, angels and men; and, indeed, without holiness he would not be that perfect being he is; unholiness is the imperfection of every rational being in whom it is; it is what has made angels and men both impure and imperfect; and since no men, even the best, are without sin; therefore none are in themselves perfect. But as for God, his ways and works are perfect, and so is his nature; being just and true, and without iniquity (Deut. 32:4). Holiness is the purity and rectitude of his nature; whose nature is so pure, as to be without spot or stain, or anything like it: he is light and purity itself, and in him is no darkness or impurity at all; as "he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity", so he is of a purer heart and mind than to have one sinful thought in it: his thoughts are not as ours; he is the pattern of purity and holiness, and to be copied after: men should be holy, as and because he is holy; it is one of the imitable perfections of God, in which he is to be followed; though it cannot be attained to, as it is in him, (Lev. 11:44, 45, 19:2; 1 Peter 1:15, 16).

Holiness is an essential attribute of God; it is his nature and essence; it is himself; he is holiness itself; "he swears by himself, because he can swear by no greater"; and he will not swear by any less, and yet he swears by his holiness, (Heb. 6:13; Ps. 89:35; Amos 4:2, 6:8) which places put and compared together show that the holiness of God is himself; and it has been thought to be not so much a particular and distinct attribute of itself, as the lustre, glory, and harmony of all the rest; and is what is called "the beauty of the Lord", (Ps. 27:4) as it is the beauty of the good angels, and of regenerate men; and, indeed, what is wisdom or knowledge, without holiness, but craft and cunning? or what is power, without it, but tyranny, oppression, and cruelty? but God is "glorious in holiness", (Ex. 15:11) this dives a lustre to all his perfections, and is the glory

of them; and therefore none of them are or can be exercised in a wrong manner, or to any bad purpose. And as it is his nature and essence, it is infinite and unbounded; it cannot be greater than it is, and can neither be increased nor diminished; when, therefore, men are exhorted to "sanctify" the Lord, and are directed to pray that his "name" may be "hallowed", or sanctified, (Isa. 8:13; Matthew 6:9) the meaning is not as if he was to be, or could be made more holy than he is; but that his holiness be declared, manifested, and celebrated more and more; it is so perfect that nothing can be added to it. And as it is his nature and essence, it is immutable and invariable; the holiness of a creature is changeable, as the holiness of angels and men; which has appeared by the apostasy of the one, and the fall of the other; and the holiness of saints, though its principle is the same, the acts and exercises are variable. But God is always the same holy Being, without any variableness, or shadow of turning. He is originally holy, he is so in and of himself, and of no other; there is none prior and superior to him, from whom he could derive or receive any holiness; as his Being is of himself, so is his holiness, which is himself: the holiness of angels and men is not of themselves, but of God; he is the fountain of holiness to all rational creatures that partake of it; it is peculiar to him, yea, only in him; Hannah says, in her song, "There is none holy as the Lord", (1 Sam. 2:2). In another song yet to be sung, the song of Moses and of the Lamb, it is said, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy" (Rev. 15:4). The holiness of creatures is but a shadow of holiness, in comparison of the holiness of God; the holy angels are chargeable with folly in his sight, and they cover their faces with their wings, while they celebrate the perfection of God's holiness; as conscious to themselves, that theirs will not bear to be compared with his (Job 4:17,18; Isa. 6:2, 3). God only is essentially, originally, underivatively, perfectly, and immutably holy.

This must be understood not of one person in the Deity, to the exclusion of the rest; as not of the Spirit, though he is peculiarly called the "Holy Ghost", and the Holy Spirit, yet not to the exclusion of the Father and Son; so not of the Father, to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; for as they are the one God, who is a Spirit, they partake of the same common and undivided nature, and all the perfections of it, and of this with the rest. Hence we read of the holy Elohim, or divine Persons, in the plural number; and of the Holy Ones, the Holy Father, the Holy Son, and the Holy Spirit, (Josh. 24:19; Prov. 30:5; Dan. 4:17). And no doubt respect is had to the holiness of the three divine persons, by the seraphim, when they said, "holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!" (Isa. 6:3) and by the four beasts, or living creatures, continually employed in the same divine service, celebrating the perfections of God in much the same language, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty!" (Rev. 4:8). As there is no doubt made of the Deity of the Father, there can be none of his holiness: our Lord addresses him under the relation of "Father", and under the epithet of "Holy Father", (John 17:11) and all that has been said of the holiness of God belongs to him; of which there can be no question made: and it is as true of the Son as of the Father; for as the Father is the holy Father, he must be the holy Son, since he is of the same nature, and is "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person"; and as the Father is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, so is the Son; as the Father loves righteousness and hates iniquity, this is expressly said of the Son, (Heb. 1:8, 9) he is eminently called "the Holy One of God", (Ps. 16:10) and "the Holy One of Israel", more than thirty times in the prophecy of Isaiah; and particularly is so called along with the titles of Redeemer and Husband, which are peculiar to the second Person, the Son of God, the Redeemer of his people, and the Husband of his church, (Isa. 47:4, 54:5) yea, he is called the "most holy", who was anointed with the Holy Ghost above his fellows, and "having the Spirit without measure", (Dan. 9:24) the title of holy he takes to himself when addressing the church, which is an emblem of the purest state of the church militant on earth, the church of Philadelphia; "These things saith he that is holy" (Rev. 3:7). Nay, the devil himself gives it to him; "I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God" (Luke 4:34). Besides, Christ is not only holy in his human nature, even perfectly so, and sanctified and set apart to his office as Mediator, by his Father; for which office holiness is a necessary requisite and qualification; but he is the Fountain of holiness to his church and people; they are sanctified in him and by him; he is made sanctification to them,

and all the holiness, or holy graces that are in them, are all from him, (John 1:14, 16) which could not be, if he was not holy, and even holiness itself. And as for the blessed Spirit, the third Person in the Deity, the epithet of "holy" is commonly given to him, as before observed; and very truly, since he is of the same nature with the Father and the Son; and so he is holy by nature and essence, and as appears by his graces, operations, and influences; and by his being grieved, speaking after the manner of men, with the sins and impurities of men; the reason of which is, because they are so contrary to his pure and holy nature, that he cannot bear them, but expresses his dislike and displeasure at them (Eph. 4:29, 30). And all this will be still more clear and manifest, by considering,

Secondly, The instances whereto and whereby the holiness of God is displayed, which are his works, and actions, and proceedings towards his creatures; God is holy in all his works; or his holiness is manifest in them, and by them (Ps. 145:17).

1. The holiness of God the Father; which is visible,

1. In the works of creation; for as he made all things by his Son, not as an instrument, but as co-efficient with him, so when he overlooked them, he pronounced them very good; which he would not have done, had there been anything impure or unholy in them. Angels, not only those that stood, but those that fell, were originally holy, as made by him: the elect angels continue in the holiness in which they were created; and the angels that sinned are not in the estate in which they were at their creation; they kept not their first estate, which was an estate of purity and holiness; and abode not in the truth, in the uprightness and integrity in which they were formed (Jude 1:6; John 8:44). And as for man, he was made after the image, and in the likeness of God, which greatly consisted in holiness; a pure, holy, and upright creature he was; and had a law given him, holy, just, and good, as the rule of his obedience, and which was inscribed on his heart; some remains of which are to be found in his fallen posterity, and even in the Gentiles.

2 The holiness of God appears in his works of providence; which, though many of them are dark and intricate, not easily penetrated into, and to be accounted for; yet there is nothing criminal and sinful in them: the principal thing objected to the holiness of God in his providences, is his suffering sin to be in the world; but then, though it is by his voluntary permission, or permissive will, yet he is neither the author nor abettor of it; he neither commands it, nor approves of it, nor persuades to it, nor tempts nor forces to it; but all the verse, forbids it, disapproves of it, dissuades from it, threatens to punish for it, yea, even chastises his own people for it; and, besides, overrules it for great good, and for his own glory; as the fall of Adam, the sin of Joseph's brethren, the Jews crucifixion of Christ; which have been instanced in, and observed under a former attribute: wherefore the dispensations of God, in his providence, are not to be charged with unholiness on this account.

3. The holiness of Jehovah the Father is to be observed in those acts of grace which are peculiar to him; as in choosing some in Christ his Son to everlasting life, before the world began. Now though not the holiness of the creature, nor even the foresight of it, is the cause of this act; yet holiness, or the sanctification of the Spirit, is fixed as a means in it; and it is the will of God, that those whom he chooses and appoints to salvation should partake of it, or come to salvation through it; nay, he has not only chosen them "through" it, as a means, but he has chosen them to it, as a subordinate end; he has chosen them to be holy in part, in this life, and perfectly in the life to come; and holiness of heart and life, is the evidence of interest in it, and nothing more powerfully excites and engages to it. The covenant which he has made with his Son Jesus Christ, on the behalf of the chosen ones, provides abundantly for their holiness, both internal and external; see (Ezek. 36:25-27) and the promises of it serve greatly to promote it, and to influence the saints to be "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). And in this covenant is laid up a rod of correction, in love, to chastize with it the sins of God's people (Ps. 89:29-34). Justification is an act of God's grace towards them; it is God, even God the Father, that justifies, through the imputation of his Son's righteousness to them; by which the holy law of God is so far from being made void, that it is established, magnified, and made honourable: nor are justified persons exempted from obedience to it, but are more strongly bound and constrained to serve it; and though God justifies the ungodly, yet not without

a righteousness provided for them, and imputed to them: nor does he justify, vindicate, or approve of their ungodliness, nor connive at it; but turns it from them, and them from that: and faith, which receives the blessing of justification from the Lord, by which men perceive their interest in it, and enjoy the comfort of it, is an operative grace, works by love to God, to Christ, and his people; and is attended with good works, the fruits of righteousness: the like may be observed with respect to other acts of the Father's grace; as adoption, pardon, &c.

Secondly, The holiness of the Son of God is to be seen in all his works; in the works of creation and providence, in common with his divine Father; and in all his works of grace; in giving himself to sanctify his church, and make it a glorious one, without spot or wrinkle, through his blood and righteousness; in redeeming his people from all iniquity, to purify them to himself a peculiar people; in bearing their sins, and making satisfaction for them, that they might live unto righteousness, and that the body of sin might be destroyed, (Eph. 5:25, 27; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24; Rom. 6:6) and so in the execution of all his offices; as a Prophet, he has appeared to be an Holy One; the faith delivered by him to the saints, is a most holy faith, wholesome words, doctrines according to godliness: as a Priest, he is holy and harmless, separate from sinners, and has offered up himself without spot to God; and though he makes intercession for transgressors, it is upon the foot of his sacrifice and righteousness: as a King, all his administrations are in purity and righteousness; and his laws, commands, and ordinances, are Holy Ones; and when he comes as judge of the world, he will appear without sin, and "judge the world in righteousness".

Thirdly, The holiness of the blessed Spirit, is visible in the formation of the human nature of Christ; in separating that mass out of which it was framed in the virgin; in sanctifying it, and preserving it from the taint and contagion of original sin; in filling the human nature, when formed, with his holy gifts and graces, and that without measure; and through him it was offered up without spot; and he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the Spirit of holiness, through the resurrection from the dead. Moreover, his holiness is manifest in the sanctification of the chosen of God, and the redeemed of the Lamb, which is therefore called, "the sanctification of the Spirit", (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2) in convincing them of sin, of the evil nature and just demerit of it; in converting them from it; in calling them with an holy calling, and to holiness; in implanting principles of grace and holiness in them; in purifying their hearts by faith, through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus; in leading them in the way of holiness, in which men, though fools, shall not err; and in carrying on, and perfecting the work of sanctification in them, "without which none shall see the Lord".

Chapter 21

OF THE JUSTICE OR RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Concerning this attribute of God, I shall,

First, Show that it does belong to him, and is natural and essential to him. Thescriptures do abundantly ascribe it to him; all rational creatures, angels and men, good and bad, acknowledge it in him, (Rev. 16:5; Ex. 9:27; Jer. 12:1; Dan. 9:9; Ps. 145:7) and remove all unrighteousness from him, and affirm there is none in him (Ps. 92:15; Rom. 9:14). And, indeed, without this attribute, he would not be fit to be the Governor of the world, and the judge of the whole earth; his government would be tyranny, and not yield that pleasure and delight to the inhabitants of it, it does; the reason of which is, because "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne" (Ps. 97:1, 2). And from his love of righteousness, and constant performance of it, it may be concluded it is natural to him; as what is loved by men, and constantly done by them, shows it to be agreeable to the nature of them, (Ps. 11:7, 9:4) and, indeed, it is originally and essentially in God; it is in and of himself, and not of another; it is his nature and essence, and is not derived from another. Adam was righteous, but not of himself, God made him upright, or righteous; saints are righteous, not by their own righteousness, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. But God is righteous in and of himself; his righteousness is essential and inderivative, and is incommunicable to a creature; it is not that by which men are made righteous, as Osiander dreamed; for though he who is Jehovah is their righteousness, yet not as he is Jehovah; for then

they would be deified by him: the righteousness of God being his nature, is infinite and immutable; the righteousness of angels and men, in which they were created, was mutable; Adam lost his, and many of the angels lost theirs; but the "righteousness" of God is "like the great mountains", as high, firm, and stable as they, and much more so (Ps. 36:6). Righteousness in creatures, is according to some law, which is the rule of it, and to which it is conformed, and is adequate so the law of God, which is holy, just, and true, is a rule of righteousness to men; but God has no law without himself, he is a law to himself; his nature and will the law and rule of righteousness to him. Some things are just, because he wills them, as such that are of a posture kind; and others he wills them because they are just, being agreeable to his nature and moral perfections. This is an attribute common to the three Persons in the Godhead, as it must be, since it is essential to Deity, and they partake of the same undivided nature and essence: hence the Father of Christ is called by him "righteous Father", (John 17:25) and Christ, his Son; is called Jesus Christ "the righteous", (1 John 2:1) and no doubt can be made of its being proper to the Holy Spirit, who convinces men "of righteousness and of judgment" (John 16:8). But,

Secondly, I shall next consider the various sorts, or branches of righteousness, which belong to God; for though it is but one in him, being his nature and essence; yet it may be considered as diversified, and as admitting of distinctions, with respect to creatures. Some distinguish it into righteousness of words, and righteousness of deeds. Righteousness of words lies in the fulfilment of his words, sayings, prophecies, and promises; and is no other than his veracity, truth, and faithfulness; which will be considered hereafter, as a distinct attribute. Righteousness of deeds, is either the rectitude, purity, and holiness of his nature; which appears in all his works and actions, and which has been treated of in the preceding chapter; or it is a giving that which belongs to himself, and to his creatures, what is each their due. So justice is defined by Cicero, an affection of the mind, "Suum cuique tribuens"; giving to everyone his own. Thus God gives or takes to himself what is his due; or does himself justice, by making and doing all things for his own glory; and by not giving his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images: and he gives to his creatures what is due to them by the laws of creation, and governs them in justice and equity, and disposes of them and dispenses to them, in the same manner

Justice, among men, is sometimes distinguished into commutative and retributive. Commutative justice lies in covenants, compacts, agreements, commerce, and dealings with one another, in which one gives an equivalent in money or goods, for what he receives of another; and when integrity and uprightness are preserved, this is justice. But such sort of justice cannot have place between God and men; what he gives, and they receive from him, is of free favour and good will; and what they give to him, or he receives from them, is no equivalent for what they have from him; "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" (Ps. 116:12) nothing that is answerable to them. Besides, God has a prior right to everything a creature has or can give; "Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?" (Rom. 11:35). Retributive justice is a distribution either of rewards or punishments; the one may be called remunerative justice, the other punitive justice; and both may be observed in God.

1. Remunerative justice, or a distribution of rewards; the rule of which is not the merits of men, but his own gracious promise; for he first, of his own grace and good will, makes promises, and then he is just and righteous in fulfilling them; for God, as Austin expresses it, "makes himself a debtor, not by receiving anything from us, but by promising such and such things to us." And his justice lies in fulfilling his promises made to such and such persons, doing such and such things; and not in rewarding any supposed merits of theirs. Thus, for instance, "The man that endures temptation shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him", (James 1:12) but the crown of life is not given according to any merit of it arising from enduring temptation, or loving the Lord; but in consequence of the promise of God graciously made to such persons, for their encouragement thereunto. Moreover, the reward is not of debt, but of grace; or God, in the distribution of rewards to men, rewards not their works, but his own grace; he first gives grace, and then rewards that grace with glory; called, "the reward

of the inheritance" (Col. 3:24). And this seems to be no other than the inseparable connection between grace and glory, adopting grace, and the heavenly inheritance; which, he having of his own grace put, does in justice inviolably maintain. Indeed, the remunerative justice of God is sometimes represented in scripture, as rendering to every man according to his deeds, or as his work shall be, (Rom. 2:5-7, 10, 22:12). But still it is to be observed, that the reward given or rendered, is owing, to the promise that is made to them for godliness, whether as a principle of grace, or as practised under the influence of grace; or godly persons have "the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come", (1 Tim. 4:8) which promise is punctually and righteously performed.

Besides, God does not reward the works and godly actions of men, as meritorious in themselves; but as they are the fruits of his own grace; who works in them both "to will and to do" of his own pleasure; and therefore he is "not unrighteous to forget their work and labour of love"; which springs from love, is done in faith, and with a view to his glory (Heb. 6:10). Moreover, the works according to which God renders eternal life, are not mens' own personal works; between which, and eternal life, there is no proportion; but the works of righteousness done by Christ, of which his obedience and righteousness consist; and which being done by him, on their account, as their Head and Representative, are reckoned to them; and, according to these, the crown of righteousness is given them by the Lord, as a righteous Judge, in a way of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8).

2. Punitive, or vindictive justice, belongs to God; It is a righteous thing with God to render tribulation to them that trouble" his people, (2 Thess. 1:6) and so to inflict punishment for any other sin committed by men; and this has been exercised by him in all ages from the beginning of the world; and has appeared in casting down from heaven to hell the angels that sinned; in drowning the old world; in destroying Sodom and Gomorrah; in the plagues on Egypt, on Pharaoh and his host; the righteousness of which was acknowledged, in some of the instances of it, by that wicked king, (Ex. 9:27) in each of the captivities of the Jews, and in the destruction of that people; and in the judgments of God on many other nations, in each of the periods of time; and as will be seen in the destruction of antichrist and the antichristian states; the righteousness of which will be ascribed to God by the angel of the waters, and by all his people, (Rev. 16:5, 6, 19:1, 2) and in the eternal punishment and everlasting destruction of ungodly men: and this righteousness is natural and essential to God; but this the Socinians deny, because they do not choose to embrace the doctrine of the necessity of Christ's satisfaction for sin, which, if granted, they must give into. But that punitive, or vindictive justice, is essential to God, or that he not only will not let sin go unpunished, but that he cannot but punish sin, is manifest,

1. From the light of nature: hence the accusations of the natural conscience in men for sins committed; the fears of divine vengeance falling upon them for it, here or hereafter; the many ways and means devised to appease angry Deity, and to avert punishment, some absurd, and others shocking; to which may be added, the name of 8ikt|, vengeance, or justice, punitive justice, the heathens give to deity; see (Rom. 2:14, 15; Acts 28:4).

2. From the word of God, and the proclamation which God himself has made; in which, among other essential perfections of his, this is one, that he will by no means clear the guilty, and not at all acquit the wicked, (Ex. 34:6,7; Num. 14:18; Nah. 1:3).

3. From the nature of God, "who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity"; cannot bear it, but hates it, and the workers of it; which hatred is no other than his punishment of it (Heb. 1:13; Isa. 1:13, 14; Ps. 5:5, 6). Now as his love of righteousness is natural and essential to him; so must hatred of sin be; to which may be added, that "he is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).

4. From the nature of sin, and the demerit of it, eternal death, everlasting punishment and destruction. Now if sin of itself, in its own nature, merits such punishment at the hands of God, he is obliged to inflict it; or otherwise there can be no demerit in it.

5. From the law of God; the sanction of it, and the veracity of God in it: sin is a transgression of the law; which God, as a lawgiver, cannot but punish; otherwise his legislative power and authority is of no effect, and would be despised: he has annexed a sanction to his

law, which is death; and his veracity obliges him to inflict it; nor is it any objection to all this, that then all sinners must be necessarily punished; since the perfections of God, though natural to him, the acts and exercises of them are according to his will; as has been instanced in his omnipotence and mercy. Besides, it will be readily allowed, and even affirmed, that no sin goes unpunished; but is either punished in the sinner himself, or in his Surety. The reason why some are not punished in themselves, is, because Christ has made satisfaction for their sins, by bearing the punishment due unto them. Hence,

6. From sin being punished in Christ, the Surety of his people, it may be strongly concluded, that punitive justice is essential to God; or otherwise, where is the goodness of God to his own Son, that he should not spare him, but awake the sword of justice against him, and inflict the whole of punishment on him, due to the sins of those for whom he suffered, if he could not have punished sin, or this was not necessary? and, indeed, where is his wisdom in being at such an expense as the blood and life of his Son, if sin could have been let go unpunished, and the salvation of his people obtained without it? and where is the love of God to men, in giving Christ for them, for their remission and salvation, so much magnified, when all this might have been without it? but without shedding of blood, as there is no remission, so none could be, consistent with the justice of God; no pardon nor salvation, without satisfaction to that: could it have been in another way, the prayer of Christ would have brought it out, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass me" (Matthew 26:39). But,

Thirdly, I shall next consider the displays of the righteousness of God in his works; and vindicate his justice in them; for "the Lord is righteous in all his ways" (Ps. 145:17).

1. In his ways and works of providence: he governs the world in righteousness, orders and disposes of all things in judgment; and though he does according to his sovereign will and pleasure in heaven and in earth, yet he acts according to the strictest rules of justice and equity; "Just and true are his ways"; "he is the Judge of all the earth, who will do right", (Rev. 15:3; Gen. 18:25) and does do it; nor is he chargeable with any unrighteousness in any of his ways and works: men may wrongly charge him, and say, as the house of Israel did; "the way of the Lord is not equal"; when it is their ways that are unequal, and not his, (Ezek. 18:29) nor is it any sufficient objection to the righteousness of God in his providences, that good men are often afflicted, and wicked men are frequently in very prosperous circumstances: these things have been stumbling and puzzling to good men, and they have not been able to reconcile them to the justice of God (see Ps. 73:4-13; Jer. 12:1, 2). As for the afflictions of God's people, these are not punishments for sins, but chastisements of them; were they indeed punishments for sin, it would argue injustice, for it would be unjust to punish twice for the same sins; once in their Surety, and again in themselves: but so it is not; their afflictions come not from God as a judge, but as a father; and not from his justice, but his love; and not to their detriment and injury, but for their good. In short, they are chastened by the Lord, that they might not be condemned with the world (1 Cor. 11:32). And as for the prosperity of the wicked, though their eyes stand out with fatness, and they have more than heart can wish, yet they are like beasts that are fattened for the slaughter; their judgment may seem to linger, and their damnation to slumber, but they do not; sudden destruction will come upon them; the tables will, ere long, be turned, and the saints, who have now their evil things, will be comforted; and the wicked, who have now their good things, will be tormented: justice, though it may not so apparently take place now, it will hereafter; when all things will be set to rights, and the judgments of God will be manifest. There is a future state, when the justice of God will shine in all its glory.

2. God is righteous in all his ways and works and acts of grace; in the predestination of men, the choice of some, and the preterition of others. While the apostle is treating on this sublime subject, he stops and asks this question, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" and answers it with the utmost abhorrence and detestation, "God forbid!" Election is neither an act of justice nor of injustice, but of the sovereign will and pleasure of God, who does what he will with his own; gives it to one, and not to another, without any imputation of injustice: if he may give grace and glory to whom he will, without such a charge, then he may determine to give it without any. If it is no

injustice in men to choose their own favourites, friends, confidants, and companions; it can be none in God to choose whom he pleases to bestow his favours on; to indulge with communion with himself now, and to dwell with him to all eternity: if it was no injustice to choose some of the angels, called elect angels, and pass by others; and even to condemn all that sinned, without showing mercy to one individual of them; it can be no injustice in him to choose some of the race of men, and save them, and pass by others, when he could have condemned them all. Nor can the imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity, be accounted an unrighteous action. God made man upright, he made himself a sinner: God gave him a righteous law, and abilities to keep it; he voluntarily broke it: God constituted the first man the federal head and representative of all his posterity; and who so fit for this as their natural head and common parent, with and in whom they were to stand and fall; and what injustice could be in that; since had he stood they would have partook of the benefits of it; as now he fell they share in the miseries of it? and since they sinned in him, it can be no unrighteous thing to reckon it to them; or that they should be made and constituted sinners, by his disobedience. It is not reckoned unjust, among men, for children to be punished for the sins of their parents, and particularly treason; and what else is sin against God? (Ex. 20:5). The justice of God shines brightly in redemption by Christ; "Zion, and her converts, are redeemed in righteousness"; a full price is paid for the redemption of them; and in it "mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other": and though it is not for all men, no injustice is done to them that are not redeemed; for if God could in justice have condemned all, it can be no act of injustice to redeem and save some. Suppose one hundred slaves in Algiers, and a man out of his great generosity, lays down a ransom price for fifty of them, does he, by this act of distinguished goodness and generosity, do any injustice to the others? or can they righteously complain of him for not ransoming them? In the justification of men, by the righteousness of Christ, the justice of God is very conspicuous; for though God justifies the ungodly, yet not without a perfect righteousness, such as is adequate to the demands of his righteous law; even the righteousness of his own Son, in the imputation of which, and justification by it, he appears to be "just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). Though God forgives sin, yet not without a satisfaction made to his justice; though it is according to the riches of his grace, yet through the blood of Christ shed for it; and upon the ground of the shedding of that blood, God "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness", (1 John 1:9) and so it is both an act of grace and of justice; as is eternal glory and happiness, being the free gift of God, through Christ and his righteousness.

Chapter 22

OF THE VERACITY OF GOD

The apostle says, "Let God be true, and every man a liar", (Rom. 3:4) this must be affirmed of him, whatever is said of creatures, he is true and truth itself.

1. God is true in and of himself: this epithet, or attribute, is expressive,

1. Of the reality of his being; he truly and really exists: this is what every worshipper of him must believe (Heb. 11:6). Creatures have but a shadow of being, in comparison of his; "Every man walks in a vain show", or image; rather in appearance than in reality, (Ps. 39:6) but the existence of God is true, real, and substantial; hence he has the name Jehovah, "I AM that I AM"; which denotes the truth, eternity, and immutability of his essence. What seems to be, and is not, is not true; what seems to be, and is, is true.

2. Of the truth of his Deity; he is the true and the living God; so he is often called, (2 Chron. 15:3; Jer. 10:10; 1 Thess. 1:9) in opposition to fictitious deities; who either have reigned themselves such, or are feigned so by others; gods only by name, not by nature; of which there have been many: but the true God is but one, and in distinction from such who are called gods in a figurative and metaphorical sense, gods by office under God; as Moses was to Pharaoh, and as kings, judges, and civil magistrates be, (Ex. 7:1; Ps. 82:1, 6, 7). But the Lord is God in a true and proper sense.

3. This title includes the truth and reality of all his perfections; he is not only omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal, and immutable, but he is truly so: what is falsely claimed by others, or wrongly

given to them, is really in him; he is not only good and gracious, holy and just, but he is truly so; what others only appear to be, he is really. Id. This may be predicated of each Person in the Godhead; the Father is the only true God, (John 17:3) though not to the exclusion of the Son, who is also the true God and eternal life; nor of the holy Spirit, who is truth; and who, with the Father and the Son, is the one true and living God (1 John 5:20, 6, 7).--This attribute of truth removes from the divine nature everything imperfect and sinful: it is opposed to unrighteousness, (Deut. 32:4) and has the epithet of just or holy along with it, when God is spoken of in his persons, ways, and works, (Rev. 3:7, 6:10, 15:3, 16:7, 19:2) it removes from him all imputation of lying and falsehood; he is not a man, that he should lie, as men do; the Strength of "Israel will not" lie; yea, he is God that "cannot" lie; it is even "impossible" that he should, (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Titus 1.2; Heb. 6:18) this frees him from all deception, he can neither deceive nor be deceived; Jeremiah, indeed, says, "O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived", (Jer. 20:7) but this must be understood either as a misapprehension and mistake of the prophet; or the sense is, if I am deceived, God has deceived me; but as that cannot be, therefore I am not deceived: though rather the words may be rendered, "thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded", to enter upon his prophetic office, and to proceed on in the execution of it. Moreover this attribute clears God of the charge of insincerity, hypocrisy, and dissimulation, which, if in him, he could not be true. Nor on the supposition of his decree to save some men, and not all, are his declarations chargeable with anything of that kind; as that he has no pleasure in the death of him that dies, and that he will have all men to be saved, (Ezek. 18:32; 1 Tim. 2:4) since the former respects not eternal death, but the captivity of the Jews, their return from it, upon their obedience, to their own land, and living in it. And the latter respects the will of God to save some of all sorts, of every rank and condition in life, and particularly Gentiles as well as Jews. In short, it removes all unfaithfulness from God, or any shadow of it: it strongly expresses the faithfulness of God; hence "true" and "faithful" are joined together, when the sayings or words of God are spoken of; nor is it any objection to the veracity of God, when what he has promised or threatened is not done; since thereunto a condition is either openly annexed or secretly understood; see (Jer. 18:7-10) but the faithfulness of God, in his promises, &c. will be distinctly considered hereafter. Concerning the veracity of God, let the following things be observed:

(1). That it is essential to him, it is his very nature and essence; he is truth itself; he is not only called the God of truth, but "God the truth", (Deut. 32:4) and so Christ asserts himself to be the "truth", (John 14:6) and the Spirit is likewise so called (1 John 5:6). To be false, fallacious, and insincere, would be to act contrary to his nature, even to deny himself; which he cannot do.

(2). It is most pure and perfect in him; as in him is light, and no darkness at all; he is righteous, and no unrighteousness is in him; is holy, and no unholiness in him; is good, and no evil in him; is wisdom, and no folly nor weakness in him; so he is truth, and no falsehood in him, not the least mixture nor appearance of it.

(3). It is first, chief, and original in him; it is first in him, as he is the first cause; it is chief, as it is perfect in him, and all truth is originally from him; natural and rational truth, which is clear and self-evident to the mind: as the Being of God, from the works of his hands, called the truth of God made manifest in men, and showed unto them (Rom. 1:18-20, 25). Moral truth, by which men know, in some measure, though sadly depraved, the difference between moral good and moral evil (Rom. 2:14, 15). Spiritual truth, truth in the inward parts, or the true grace of God; and evangelical truth, the word of truth, and the several doctrines of it; these are not of men, but of God. All untruth is from Satan, the father of lies; but all truth is from the God of truth, and from the Spirit, who leads into all truth, as it is in Jesus.

(4). Truth, as in God, is eternal; what is truth now, was always truth with him in his eternal mind; for "known to him are all his works from the beginning", or from eternity, (Acts 15:18) as also his "word is true from the beginning", or from eternity (Ps. 119:160). What is true with us today, might not be true yesterday, and will not be true tomorrow, because things are in a succession with us, and are so known by us; but not so with God, in whose eternal mind all things stand in one view; and besides, as veracity is his nature, his

essence, it must be eternal, since that is, which contains all truth in it; and his truth will be to all generations, even for ever (Ps. 100:5, 117:2).

(5). It is immutable and invariable, as he himself, as his nature is; truth does not always appear in the same light to men; at first more obscurely, then more clearly; it has its gradations and increase; but in God is always the same: creatures are mutable, fallacious, and deceitful; but God is the same, true and faithful, yesterday, today, and for ever. An attribute on account of which he is greatly to be praised and celebrated (Ps. 89:5; Isa. 38:19).

II. God is true in his works; or all his works are true, and his veracity is displayed in them; and these are either internal or external.

1. Internal acts within himself; some relative to himself, to the divine persons, their modes of subsisting, and distinction from each other; as paternity, filiation, and spiration; which are true and real things: the Father is truly and properly the Father of Christ, and not in name only; and Christ is his own proper Son, not in a figurative sense, or by office, as magistrates are called the children of the most High; but the Son of the Father "in truth" and love, (2 John 1:3) and the Spirit of truth is really breathed, and proceeds from the Father and the Son, (John 15:26) others are relative to creatures; the decrees of God within himself, which are the secret actings and workings of his mind, the thoughts of his heart, the deep things of God, his counsels of old, which are "faithfulness" and "truth"; truly made, and truly performed (Isa. 25:1).

2. External works, as the works of creation, providence, and grace, which are all true, and real things; and in which the veracity of God appears, both in making and in continuing them.

(1). The works of creation, the heavens and the earth, which are both his handy work, and all that are in them; in which the invisible perfections of his nature are displayed and discerned, his eternal power and Godhead, and his veracity among the rest. The heavens above us, the sun, moon, and stars we behold, and the earth on which we live, are real, and not imaginary, they truly exist. Satan pretended to show to Christ "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them", (Matthew 4:8) but this was a false and delusive representation, a "deceptio visus", by which he would have imposed on Christ, but could not.

(2). The works of providence; those in an ordinary way, by which God governs the world, and disposes of all things according to truth and righteousness; and such as are of an extraordinary kind, as those done by the hands of Moses, in Egypt; and by Christ and his apostles: these were real things, to answer some wise ends and purposes in the world; when those done by the magicians were only in show, in appearance, and by a sort of legerdemain; as those done by antichrist, in the sight of men, as they imagine, whereby he deceives them that dwell on the earth; and therefore are called "lying wonders", feigned things, which have no truth in them, (Rev. 13:13, 14; 2 Thess. 2:9, 10) but the wonderful works of God are true, and without deceit, as are all his judgments he executes by the sword, famine, pestilence, &c.

(3). The works of grace done by him, his acts of grace, both in eternity and time; his choice of persons to eternal life, is true, firm, and real, the foundation of God, which stands sure; the covenant of grace, made in Christ, full of blessings and promises, faithfully performed; the mission of Christ into the world, and his incarnation, who was really made flesh, and dwelt among men; the truth of which the apostle confirms by the various senses of seeing, hearing, and handling (1 John 1:1). Justification by his righteousness is really imputed to his people, and by which they truly become righteous; and not in a putative and imaginary sense; pardon by his blood, which is not merely typical, as by the blood of slain beasts, but real; atonement by the sacrifice of himself, which he really and truly offered up to God; and sanctification by the Spirit, which is the new man, created in righteousness and true holiness; and not outward, typical, and ceremonial, nor feigned and hypocritical: and adoption, by which the saints are now really the sons of God; though it does not yet appear what they shall be; and to which the Spirit bears a true and real witness; and which is unto an inheritance, real, solid, and substantial.

III. God is true in his words, in his essential Word, his Son, who was "in the beginning with God"; had a true and real existence with him, and was God, really and truly God; he is true in his person and natures, the true God and eternal life, who took unto him a true

body and a reasonable soul; and whose human nature is the true tabernacle God pitched, and not man: true in his offices he bears; the true prophet raised up and sent of God, the true light, that lightens men in every sense; the true priest, not of the order of Aaron, but of the order of Melchizedek; the true and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords; the true Mediator between God and men, and not a typical one, as Moses. God is true in his written word; the scriptures are the scriptures of truth, even the whole of them, (Dan. 10:21) they are given by inspiration from God, are the breath of God, who is the God of truth, and therefore to be received, "not as the word of man, but as in truth the word of God", (1 Thess. 2:13) the legal part of them is truth; the apostle speaks of the "truth in the law", known by men, (Rom. 2:20) there is not a precept in it but what is true and right; "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" (Ps. 19:9). And the gospel part of them is eminently the word of truth, (Eph. 1:13) and all the doctrines of it, which are "pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Ps. 12:6). And the truth and veracity of God appears in the fulfilment of the predictions, promises, and threatenings contained in his word, which is the same with his faithfulness; which we shall particularly treat of in the next chapter, being naturally led to it; the veracity of God is the foundation of his faithfulness; and his faithfulness is a branch of that; and they are often put one for the other, and signify the same thing.

Chapter 23

OF THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Faithfulness is an attribute that belongs to God; from whence he is denominated the "faithful God" (Deut. 7:9). It is essential to him, and without which he would not be God; to be unfaithful, would be to act contrary to his nature, to deny himself, (2 Tim. 2:13) an unfaithful God would be no God at all; it is a most glorious perfection of his nature; it is "great", like himself; yea, it is infinite; "Great is thy faithfulness", (Lam. 3:23) it relies to all persons and things God has any concern with; it is all around him; he is, as it were, clothed and covered with it; and there is none in any creature like unto it (Ps. 89:8). There is faithfulness in the holy angels, and in good men, but not like what is in God; and therefore he puts no trust in them, (Job 4:18) his faithfulness is invariably the same; it has never failed in anyone instance, nor never will; it is established in the heavens, and will continue to all generations, (Ps. 89:2, 24, 33, 119:90; Josh. 23:14) otherwise there would be no firm foundation for trust and confidence in him; but he is the "faithful Creator", and covenant God and Father of his people; to whom they may safely commit themselves, and depend upon him for all mercies promised, both temporal and spiritual, (1 Peter 4:19; 1 Thess. 5:23, 24) for the faithfulness of God chiefly lies in the performance of his word, which is certain, with respect to all that is spoken by him; for "hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Verily he will (Num. 23:19; Luke 1:45). And it appears,

First, In the performance of what he has said with respect to the world in general; as, that it shall never more be destroyed by a flood, as it once was; and for a token and confirmation of it, God has set the rainbow in the cloud; and now four thousand years are gone since the covenant was made; and God has been faithful to it, though the earth has been sometimes threatened with destruction by violent storms, and sudden inundations; see (Gen. 9:11-16; Isa. 54:9). Also that the ordinances of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, shall not depart, but always continue in their being, use, and influence; and now they have kept their course, or station, and have done their office, exactly and punctually, for almost six thousand years; see (Jer. 31:35, 36, 33:25). Likewise that the revolutions of the time, and seasons of the year, should keep their constant course; that, "while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease", (Gen. 8:22) and so it has always been, and still is, in one part of the world or another, according to the different climates. Remarkable was the faithfulness of God to the Jewish nation, in that their land required rain only at two seasons of the year, and God promised it to them, and which they always had; though sometimes so ungrateful as not to fear him who gave them rain, "both the former and the latter, in his season", and "reserved" for them "the appointed weeks of the harvest", (Jer. 5:24; see Deut. 11:14, 15) and whereas God has given reason to

expect that his creatures should be preserved in their being, and provided for by him, with the necessaries of life; he has not left himself without a witness to his faithfulness, in all ages and nations, giving rain from heaven and fruitful seasons; and so filling the hearts of his creatures with food and gladness; whose eyes all of them wait upon him, and he gives them their meat in due season, (Acts 14:17; Ps. 36:5, 6, 145:15, 16). And from all this it may be strongly concluded, that whatsoever God has said concerning the world, which is yet to be fulfilled, shall be most certainly done; as the judgment of it, the end and consummation of all things in it, the conflagration of it, and the making new heavens and a new earth, wherein will dwell righteousness (2 Peter 3:7-13).

Secondly, The faithfulness of God appears in the fulfilment of what he has said with respect to Christ, and the salvation of men by him; both of what he has said of him, and of what he has said to him: and, indeed, the faithfulness of God is displayed in Christ as in a mirror.

1. In the performance of what he has said of him; as that he should be born of a woman, be of the seed of Abraham, spring from the tribe of Judah, arise out of the family of David, be born of a virgin at Bethlehem, and converse much in Galilee, (Gen. 3:15, 22:18, 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:12, 13; Mic. 5:2; Isa. 7:14 9:1, 2) and suffer, and die, and work out the salvation of his people, (Ps. 22:1-31; Isa. 53:1-12, 25:9 35:4, 49:6) all which has been fully accomplished (Matthew 1:1, 18-23, 2:5, 6, 8, 11, 22, 23, 4:13-16; Luke 1:68-72; 1 Cor. 15:3).

2. In the performance of what he said to Christ, or promised him; as that he would help him, and strengthen him, as man and mediator, in the great work of redemption and salvation; and which help and strength Christ expected, and believed he should have, and had it, (Ps. 89:21; Isa. 50:7, 9, 49:8) and that though he should die, and be laid in the grave and buried; yet he would raise him from the dead, and that on the third day; and which was accordingly done, (Ps. 16:10; Hosea 6:2; 1 Cor. 15:4) and that when he had done his work, being delivered unto death for the sins of his people, and raised again for their justification, he should be glorified at his right hand, in his human nature; and accordingly, Christ having done his work, pleaded this promise, and it was fulfilled, (Ps. 110:1; John 17:4, 5; Phil. 2:9, 10) and that he should see his seed have a numerous offspring, which should continue to the end of the world, (Isa. 53:10; Ps. 89:4, 29, 36) and which has been accomplished in the numerous conversions both among Jews and Gentiles, in the first ages of Christianity; and which have continued, more or less, ever since; and will still more manifestly appear when the nation of the Jews shall be born at once, and the fullness of the Gentiles be brought in.

3. The faithfulness of God is displayed in the person, office, and works of Christ. This, as all other divine perfections, is common to each person in the Godhead, and shines resplendently in the Son of God, "the brightness of his Father's glory", who has every perfection the Father has; so that he that has seen the Son has seen the Father, the same perfections being in the one as in the other, and this of faithfulness among the rest; which is to be seen in Christ as in a mirror, or glass; and an estimate may in some measure be taken, and judgment made of the faithfulness of God, by what appears in his Son; who has been "faithful to him that appointed him" to his office as Mediator. Moses was faithful in the house of God, as a servant; but Christ as a Son over his own house, (Heb. 3:2-6) and whose faithfulness may be observed,

(l). In the performance of his engagements: he engaged to be the Surety of his people; to stand in their place and stead; to do and suffer for them what should be required, and to take care of all their affairs and concerns for time and eternity; and accordingly, he is become the Surety of the better testament, (Heb. 7:22) he engaged to be the Saviour and Redeemer of them; he is often spoken of as such in the Old Testament; that is, as one who had engaged to work out their redemption and salvation; and which he has now obtained, and become the author of, (Heb. 5:9, 9:12)he engaged to come into the world, in order to do this work, saying, "Lo, I come"; and he is come, and has done it; and that he came into the world, and has done this for sinners, the chief of sinners, is a "faithful saying"; in which the faithfulness of God in his promises, and of Christ in his engagements, is abundantly displayed, (1 Tim. 1:15) he engaged to come and fulfil the law, both its precepts and its penalty, and to become a sacrifice for sin; ceremonial sacrifices being insufficient, (Ps.

40:6-8) and he is accordingly become the fulfilling "end of the law for righteousness to all that believe"; and has offered himself, soul and body, without spot to God; "a Sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour"; and whereby sin has been fully expiated and put away, (Rom. 10:4; Heb. 9:14, 26, 10:5-10) he engaged to pay off the debts of his people, and by being their Surety, become responsible for them, and to clear off all their scores; which he has done to the uttermost farthing, and blotted out the handwriting of ordinances against them. In short, he engaged to feed the flock of God, to take the whole care and oversight of it; and he does feed his flock like a shepherd, and has shown himself to be the good and faithful one, by laying down his life for the sheep, (Zech. 11:4, 7; Isa. 40:11; John 10:14).

(2). The faithfulness of Christ is seen in his discharge of the trust reposed in him, which is very large and great; the Father hath "given all things into his hand", (John 3:35) all the persons of his elect to be kept, preserved, and saved by him; and so they are and shall be, even everyone of them, whom Christ will present to his Father, and say, "Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me"; not one is lost (Heb. 2:13). Christ is entrusted with a fullness of grace, to supply the wants of his people; it has been his Father's pleasure, that it should dwell in him for their use; he has deposited it with him, to communicate it to them, as they need it; and he has been faithful to do it, in all ages and generations; he has been to all his churches, and to all his saints, in every period of time, "A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon", (Song 4:15) saints both of the Old and New Testament, have "all received of his fullness, and grace for grace" (John 1:16). Eternal life and happiness is in his hands, and he has a power to give it to as many as the Father has given him; and he is faithful in the use of that power, and does give it to all his sheep, so that none of them shall ever perish, (1 John 5:11; John 17:2, 10:28) yea, the glory of all the divine perfections, as concerned in the salvation of men, was entrusted with Christ; and he has been faithful "in things pertaining to God", as well as in making "reconciliation for the sins of the people"; and in doing the one he has taken care of the other. The glory of God is great in the salvation of men, even of his justice and holiness; as well as of his wisdom, power, faithfulness, grace, and mercy (Heb. 2:17; Ps. 20:5, 85:10).

(3). Christ has appeared to be faithful in the exercise of his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King: in the exercise of his prophetical office; for which he was abundantly qualified, by lying in the bosom of his Father, and so privy to his whole mind and will, which he has faithfully declared; all that he heard of the Father, all the words and doctrines he gave him, as man, he made known to his disciples; in doing which, he sought not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him; and therefore must be true and faithful, and no unrighteousness or unfaithfulness in him, (John 1:18, 7:16-18, 15:15, 17:8) and therefore is justly entitled to be called the Amen, and faithful Witness (Rev. 3:14). In the exercise of his priestly office; in which he is faithful to him that appointed him; and rightly bears the character of a faithful high priest, in that he has offered up himself to make atonement for the sins of his people; and as the Advocate for them, even Jesus Christ the righteous, faithful, and true; and takes perfect care, in all things, of the house of God, over which he is a priest (Heb. 2:17, 3:1,2, 10:21, 9:14; 1 John 2:1). And in the exercise of his kingly office; all whose administrations in it are just and true; righteousness being the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins; and with great propriety is he called "faithful and true, since in righteousness he doth judge and make war" (Rev. 15:3, 19:11; Isa. 11:5).

(4). The faithfulness of Christ is manifest in the fulfilment of his promises, which he made to his disciples; as, that he would not leave them comfortless, but come and see them; as he did, after his resurrection, and comforted them with his presence, and filled them with joy at the sight of him, (John 14:18, 20:20) that they should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and therefore were bid to wait at Jerusalem for it, and where it was bestowed upon them, on the day of Pentecost, in a very large and extraordinary manner, (Acts 1:4, 2:4, 33) that he would be with them in the administration of his word and ordinances; and accordingly did go forth and work with them, confirming the word by signs following, (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:20) yea, he has promised his presence with his ministers and churches to the end of the world, and that even "where

two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them", (Matthew 18:20 28:20) and he makes his word good, which the experience of his ministers and people in all ages confirms: he has promised also to come again, and take his disciples and faithful followers to himself, that where he is they may be also; and which was not only verified in his immediate disciples, but in his saints in all ages, whom, when they have served their generation according to the will of God, he comes and takes them to himself, by death; and "to them that look for him, will he appear a second time, without sin, unto salvation" (John 14:2, 3; Heb. 9:28).

(5). The faithfulness of Christ may be observed in his concern with the covenant of grace, and the promises of it; the covenant was made with him as the Head and Representative of his people, and stands fast with him; all the blessings of it are lodged with him, and faithfully dispensed by him; the promises were made to him, who only actually existed when they were made, and to whom only they could be given; he was the Amen, and faithful Witness of them, of their being made; and they are Yea and Amen in him; by whose blood the blessings and promises of it are ratified and confirmed; and therefore called, "the blood of the everlasting covenant": and it is in and through him that believers come to have an interest in the promises, a right unto them, and to be partakers of them, (Ps. 89:3, 24; Rev. 3:14; 2 Cor. 1:20; Heb. 13:20; Eph 3:6). And now by the faithfulness of Christ thus manifestly displayed, may be learnt somewhat more of the attribute of faithfulness, as it is in God. Which leads on to consider,

Thirdly, The faithfulness of God in the performance of what he has said in the covenant, and the promises of it, with respect to his special people. God is denominated "faithful", from his keeping covenant and mercy with them, (Deut. 7:9) every covenant God has made with man, he has been faithful in: he made a covenant with Adam, as the head and representative of his posterity, promising a continuance of happiness to him and his, provided he remained in his state of innocence; and threatening with death, in case of disobedience. Adam was unfaithful, and broke the covenant; "they, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant" (Hosea 6:7). But God was faithful to it, and deprived him of his happiness, and pronounced the sentence of death on him and his. God made a covenant with Noah, and all the creatures, promising that he would no more destroy the world by a flood; and he has faithfully kept it, as before observed. He made a covenant with Abraham, that he would make him the father of many nations, and that kings should spring from him, and that he would give to his posterity the land of Canaan: the former part of which was verified in the Ishmaelites, Israelites, Edomites, Midianites, and others, with their kings, which were of him: and the latter part, by putting the people of Israel in possession of Canaan, by Joshua; which they held long by the tenure of their obedience, according to his promise; but when they broke the covenant, he destroyed them from it, as he threatened, (Gen. 17:5, 6; Josh. 21:43, 23:16). He made a covenant at Sinai, with all the people of Israel; and, according to his engagements, continued to them their blessings, natural, civil, and religious; but they were not steadfast in his covenant, and he dispossessed them of them. But the grand and principal covenant, is the covenant of grace; which God has made in Christ with all his elect, and is ordered in all things, and sure; and which he will never break, and they cannot; and which will never be removed, but ever be inviolably kept; and there are promises of various sorts, which God has graciously made to his people, and which are faithfully performed by him.

1. Some of a temporal nature; for "godliness" and godly men have "the promise of the life that now is", of things belonging to it, as well as "of that which is to come", (1 Tim. 4:8) these their heavenly Father knows they have need of, and therefore provides them for them, and promises them unto them. He has said, "that they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing", (Ps. 34:10) they shall have that which is good, as every creature of God is good, good food and good raiment; though it may be but mean, yet it is good, and better than the best of men deserve; and they want not any, that God, in his infinite wisdom, sees is good for them; for though they and others may think it would be better for them if they had a greater affluence of the things of this life; but God thinks otherwise, and knows it would be to their hurt, as sometimes riches are: he has bid his people "trust in the Lord, and do good",

and has promised, they "shall be fed", (Ps. 37:3) not all of them with dainties and delicious food, but with food convenient for them; he has assured them, their "bread shall be given them", and their: "waters shall be sure", (Isa. 33:16) and this is sufficient to support and confirm his faithfulness: nor is the poverty of some of God's people any objection to it, since he has nowhere promised them the riches of this world, and has given them no reason to expect them; but he has promised them better riches, durable riches, and righteousness, the riches of grace and glory, and these he gives to them; see a testimony from David's experience of the faithfulness of God, with respect to temporal things (Ps. 37:25). God has not promised his people security from outward afflictions; but rather has suggested to them that they may look for them; since his people are described as a poor and afflicted people; and it is their common case; many are the afflictions of the righteous; it is what they are appointed to, and what are appointed for them; but then God has promised that they shall work for their good; either for their temporal good, as Jacob's afflictions worked for his; or for their spiritual good, the exercise and increase of grace and holiness; and always for their eternal good, (2 Cor. 4:17) and also that he will be with them in them, support them under them, and deliver out of them in due time: all which is faithfully performed by him, (1 Cor. 10:13).

2. Others are of a spiritual nature; and the principal of these is, and which is the sum of the covenant, "They shall be my people, and I will be their God", (Jer. 32:38) and which appears in their election, redemption, and the effectual calling; which is saying, that he has a special love and affection for them, and will continue it, as he does: nor are his chastisements of them, his hiding his face from them for a time, his displeasure at them, and being angry with them, any objection to the perpetuity of his love; since these are not contrary to it, but rather the fruits of it, and for their good: it signifies, that they shall have his gracious presence with them, and may expect it, and which they have; nor do their doubts, and fears, and complaints disprove it, (Isa. 41:10, 49:14-16) which are generally owing to their ignorance and unbelief; God is with them, and they know it; however, he is never far from them, nor long; he does not depart from them, nor withdraw his gracious presence from them totally and finally: it assures them of his protection, that he will be all around them, guard them, and secure them, preserve and keep them by his power, through faith unto salvation, as he does; for though they may fall into sin, yet they rise again by his grace; and though they fall into temptation, and by it, yet they are delivered out of it; they are kept from a final and total falling away; they are not of them that draw back unto perdition: in a word, this promise is expressive of their enjoyment of God here, and for evermore; and he is their shield, and exceeding great reward; their portion in life, at death, and for ever; their all in all. There are many particular spiritual promises made to the people of God; and which are made good by him; as, that he will sprinkle clean water upon them, and cleanse them from all their sins; which is to be understood of justifying grace, through the blood of Christ; that he will forgive their iniquities, and remember their sins no more; and he is just in doing it, upon the account of the blood of his Son, and faithful to his own promise, (1 John 1:9) that he will give them new hearts and new spirits, which he does in regeneration; and take away the heart of stone, and give an heart of flesh; as he does, when he removes the hardness of the heart, and gives evangelical repentance unto life; that he will put his laws in them, and write them in their minds; not only give knowledge of them, but both a disposition and grace to observe them; working in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure: that he will put his Spirit into them, and give them spiritual strength to keep his statutes, and perform every duty; that he will carry on his good work of grace in them, and perform it, until the day of Christ; of which they may be confident, since he has promised it; that he will give them more grace, a sufficiency of it, and supply all their need out of the fullness in Christ; and that his fear shall be continually in their hearts; and they shall not depart from him, but persevere in faith and holiness to the end. All which promises, and more, are faithfully and truly performed in all his people (see Jer. 31:33,34, 32:38-40; Ezek. 36:25-27). 3c. There are other promises which respect the life to come; the eternal happiness of the saints in another world: the apostle speaks of the promise of this, "as the promise", by way of eminency, as if it was the only promise, or,

however, the principal one, in which all others issue and end; "This is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life", (1 John 2:25) and this is an ancient one, made before the world began, and by God, that "cannot lie", (Titus 1:2) who is faithful and true, and will most certainly perform it; wherefore, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him", (James 1:12). 4. Fourthly, The faithfulness of God appears in fulfilling his threatenings, as well as his promises. God threatened Adam, that in the day he eat of the forbidden fruit, he should surely die; and he immediately became mortal, death began at once to work in him; his soul was seized directly with a spiritual or moral death, guilt, and terror of conscience, a sense of divine wrath, and deprivation of the divine presence, and he became liable to eternal death; nor had he any reason to expect any other, until he heard that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; and the sentence of death passed on him, and all his posterity in him, as soon as he had sinned, according to the divine threatening (Rom. 5:12). God threatened the inhabitants of the old world with a flood to destroy them, for their impiety and wickedness; and though his patience and forbearance were for a long time exercised, yet he was faithful to his word, and brought it upon the world of the ungodly, and destroyed them all. God threatened the people of Israel with captivity, and other judgments, if they walked not in his ways, and broke his statutes; of which see (Lev. 26:1-46; Deut. 28:1-68) all which grievous threatenings, and sore judgments, have been exactly fulfilled in that people, and remain to this day; who are a standing proof of God's faithfulness in this respect. And as God has threatened men with the burning of the world, and the works of it, and the wicked in it; and damnation to all unbelieving and impenitent sinners, they may be assured of it, and expect it; for as it is most true, and may be depended upon, that "he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved"; so it is equally as true, and as surely to be depended on, that "he that believeth not, shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Nor is it any objection to the faithfulness of God in fulfilling his threatenings, that Nineveh was spared, when it was threatened, that in forty days it should be overthrown; since there was a condition implied, a secret proviso made, "except they repented"; and which their hope of mercy, and the mercy shown them upon their repentance, fully confirm; and so the veracity and faithfulness of God is sufficiently secured; and, indeed, in many promises and threatenings, respecting temporal things, a condition is either openly expressed, or secretly understood; according to which God in providence proceeds, (Jer. 18:7-10).

Chapter 24

OF THE SUFFICIENCY AND PERFECTION OF GOD

From this attribute of God, he has one of his names, "Shaddai", which signifies, who is sufficient, or all-sufficient; of which see Chapter 3. Three things may be observed under this attribute.

1. That God is a self-sufficient Being, and needs not anything from without himself to support himself, or to make himself happy. He is the "first" of Beings, the first and the last; before him there was no God formed, nor will be any after him; from everlasting to everlasting he is God; and therefore his existence is not owing to any; nor has he received any assistance or support from any; being self-existent, he must be self-subsistent; as he existed of himself, and subsisted in and of himself, millions and millions of ages, even an eternity, inconceivable to us, alone, before any other existed, he must be self-sufficient, and as then, so to all eternity. He is an "infinite" and "all-comprehending" Being; to what is infinite nothing can be added: if anything was wanting in him he would be finite; if there was any excellency in another, which is not in him, he would not be infinite, and so not God: being infinite, he is incomprehensible by others; and comprehends in himself all excellencies, perfections, and happiness; and therefore self-sufficient; "Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again for of him, and through him, and for him are all things" (Rom. 11:35, 36). God is the "summum bonum", the chief good, and has all that is good in him; he is good essentially, originally, and inderivatively; the source and fountain of all goodness; every good and perfect gift comes from him, (James 1:17) and therefore must have a fullness of goodness in him sufficient for himself, as well as for

his creatures, and can receive nothing from them; otherwise he would not be the independent Being he is: all have their dependence on him, and owe their being, and the preservation of it, to him; but he depends on none; which he would, if he stood in need of, or received anything from them. He is possessed of all perfections, as has been abundantly showed in the preceding chapters, and is sufficiently happy in them; he is perfect and entire, wanting nothing, and therefore self-sufficient: he is the Fountain; creatures, and what they have, are streams; and it would be as absurd for him to need them, or anything from them, as for the fountain to need its streams. Besides, God in his divine persons, God Father, Son and Spirit, have enough within themselves, to give the utmost, yea, infinite complacency, delight, and satisfaction among themselves, and to one another, and had before any creatures were made, and would have had if none had been made, and so ever will; the Father delighted in the Son, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person"; the Son in the Father, before whom he was always rejoicing, when as yet no creature existed; and both in the blessed Spirit, proceeding from them; and he in them, see (Prov. 8:30) for creation adds nothing at all to the perfection and happiness of God, nor makes the least alteration in him. It is indeed said, "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created", (Rev. 4:11) but pleasure there does not signify delight, satisfaction, and happiness; as if they were made for the sake of that in God; to add unto it, and increase it; but the good will and pleasure of God; it is 8ia to GsXtipa oou, and should be rendered, "by thy will they are and were created: God has made all things for himself; that is, for his glory, his manifestative glory; but then this adds nothing to his essential glory and happiness; the heavens, and so the other parts of the creation, declare his glory; but to whom? not to himself, he needs no such declaration; he knows perfectly his own glory, which is always invariably the same; but to angels and men, that they may contemplate it, and receive benefit by it. The invisible perfections of God, his eternal power and Godhead, are seen and understood by the things that are made; but not by God himself, who needs no such glass to view them in; but by men; and the design thereof is, to make some better and happier, and others inexcusable. All creatures stand in need of God to supply them and support them; they consist in him, are upheld by the word of his power, live, and move, and have their beings in him; but he stands in need of none of them, being self-sufficient. And as he does not stand in need of the creation in general, so not of men and angels in particular; not of men, nor of any services of theirs, which can add nothing to his perfection and happiness; not of their worship, for he is "not worshipped with mens' hands, as though he needed anythings", no not their worship, (Acts 17:25) he is and ought to be the sole object of their worship; it is their duty to worship him, and that in a spiritual manner, suitable to his nature as a Spirit; but then not he, but they are the gainers by it; the ordinances of divine service under the former dispensation were, and those under the present are, for the instruction, edification, comfort, and peace of the worshippers, who are hereby led into communion with God, and the enjoyment of his gracious presence; and so find it is good for them to wait upon him in them. But what benefit does he receive thereby? he stands in no need of their prayers; it is both their duty and privilege to pray to him, the God of their life, for the mercies of it, temporal and spiritual; and he is pleased to express his approbation of it, and to resent a contrary behaviour: but who has the advantage of it? not he, but they; for whose sake is the throne of grace set up? not for his own sake, but for the sake of his people, that they may come to it and find grace and mercy to help them in their time of need: nor does he want their praises, nor is he benefited by them; they are his due, and it becomes men to give them to him; and he condescends to accept of them, and express his well pleasedness in them; but then the celebration of his praises adds nothing to his perfection and happiness, but to the perfection and happiness of men, who are made better thereby: nor is the obedience and righteousness of men of any profit to God; obedience to his commands ought to be yielded, and works of righteousness enjoined by him ought to be performed; but then when we have done all we can, we are but "unprofitable servants" to him; "if thou be righteous what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?" such works and such righteousness may be profitable to men, and is a reason why they are

to be done; but "can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself, or to others? is it any pleasure to the almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect?" (Job 22:2, 3, 35:7, 8; Luke 17:10; Titus 3:8). Should it be said, that God is glorified by men in the worship of him, by prayer to him, and praising of him; by obedience to his will, and by living soberly, righteously, and godly, (John 15:9; Matthew 5:16) it is very true, these make for the manifestation and display of his glory among men, but make no addition to his essential glory and happiness; the same may be said of the worship and services of angels, of the imperfection and unprofitableness of which to God they are sensible themselves, and blush and cover their faces while performing them, (Isa. 6:2, 3) and though they are indeed made use of as instruments in providence (but not in creation) in the preservation of God's people, and in the destruction of their enemies, and in other affairs of this world, yet not of necessity, but of choice; it is not because God needs them, and cannot do without them, but because it is his will and pleasure; just as he makes use of the ministry, and ministers of the word, for the conversion of sinners and comfort of saints; not that he needs them, nor could not convert the one and comfort the other without them; for it is certain he can, and often does, but because these are the means and instruments he chooses to make use of, (1 Cor. 3:5-7). There is a very remarkable expression in (Ps. 16:2, 3). My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight: which if spoken by David of himself only, indeed confirms what has been before asserted, that the goodness of men, even of the best of men, is of no advantage to God himself, but to others. The goodness of David in preparing for the building of the temple, and providing for the worship of God in it, in composing hymns and psalms to be sung by men, and in the whole of his life and conversation, was of no avail to the essential happiness of God; but was of use to the saints, both for their profit and by way of example to them: but if spoken by him in the person of Christ, as it is clear the words are, then they carry in them an higher sense still; as, that the holiness of Christ, as man, added nothing to the perfection of God and his nature; that the obedience he yielded in it was for the sake of men, who had the advantage of it, and not God; that the satisfaction he made to divine justice for his people, God stood in no need of; he could have glorified his justice in the destruction of them, as well as in the apostate angels, the old world, and Sodom and Gomorrah: though the debt of obedience paid to the law, and the debt of punishment paid to justice in their room, has magnified the law and made it honourable; the benefit of this redounds to men only; who hereby have their debts paid, their scores cleared, and they stand free and discharged in open court. Though the glory of God is greatly displayed in salvation by Christ, the good will is to men; and all the good things he is come an high priest of, and that come thereby, come not to God, but to men; as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life. God is then a self-sufficient being, and needs nothing from without himself; nor does he receive anything. 2. God is an all-sufficient Being, and has enough within himself to communicate to his creatures. He is able to do whatsoever he pleases, to fulfil all his engagements and promises, and to do exceeding abundantly above all that men ask or think. And so communicative and diffusive is his goodness, that it extends to all his creatures, and every good and perfect gift comes from him; which is a full proof of his all- sufficiency: and which appears, 2a. In his gifts of nature and providence; for he "gives life, and breath, and all things" to his creatures, (Acts 17:25). A painter may paint as near to life as can be, and a sculptor may give a statue its just features, and frame its limbs in proper symmetry and proportion, but neither of them can give life and breath; but God is sufficient to do this, and has done it: he breathed into Adam the breath of life; and gives life to all his posterity; and is, with great propriety, called the God of their life, (Ps. 42:8) and he is sufficient to support, maintain, and preserve the life he has given, and does, as long as he pleases, (Job 10:12, 12:10; Ps. 66:9) and to provide for men all the necessaries of life, as food and raiment; which Jacob was fully satisfied of, and therefore covenanted with God for them, (Gen. 28:20) and to take care of all the creatures; the fowls of heaven, and of the mountains; the beasts of the field and forest; and "the cattle on a thousand hills"; which, as they are his property, they are his care; and a large family they be

to provide for every day, and food suitable to them; and yet this he is sufficient to do, and does; all wait upon him, and he gives them their portion of meat in due season, (Ps. 50:10, 11, 104:27, 28, 145:15, 147:9) yea, he is sufficient to govern the whole world; nor does he need any wisdom, counsel, advice, and assistance in it, from any of his creatures, (Isa. 40:13, 14) he disposes and overrules all things as he pleases; and not only influences, directs, and manages, in matters of the greatest importance, which concern kings and governors, kingdoms and states, but even those of the lowest consideration and use; and so in all things intervening, or of a class between the one and the other, (Ps. 22:28; Prov. 8:15, 16; Matthew 10:29, 30) in a view of which it may well be said, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" &c. What an all-sufficiency must he be possessed of! (Rom. 11:33). 2b. God appears to be all-sufficient in the communications of his grace; he is the God of all grace, and is able to cause all grace to abound towards his people, and to supply all their wants out of that rich and glorious plenitude, and all-sufficiency in himself, by Jesus Christ; he has stored the covenant with all the blessings of grace; he has prevented Christ, the head and mediator of it with all the blessings of goodness; he has blessed his people in him with all spiritual blessings, and given them grace in him before the world began; and caused the fulness of it to dwell in him, which is always sufficient for them, sufficient for them in all ages and periods of time; for them of all nations and kingdoms throughout the world; for them in every state and condition of life; for all believers, weak or strong: and he has a sufficiency of it for all saving purposes; for their acceptance with God, and justification before him; for the remission of their sins, and the cleansing of their souls, and for the supply of all their wants while they are in this state of imperfection; and he has a sufficiency of it to communicate to them at all times, when they are called to service, ordinary or extraordinary, to do or suffer for his name's sake; in times of affliction, temptation, desertion, and in the hour of death, to bear up under, and carry them through all, and bring them safe to his kingdom and glory (John 1:14, 16; 2 Cor. 12:9; Phil. 4:19). 3. God is a perfect Being; entirely perfect, and wanting nothing; "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect", (Matthew 5:48) his nature is perfect; the more simple and uncompounded any being is, the more perfect it is. God is a Spirit, "actus simplicissimus", the most pure, spiritual, simple, and uncompounded Being, and therefore the most perfect. No perfection of Deity is wanting in him; as appears from what has been under consideration. There is a fulness of the Godhead which dwells in Christ, and the same therefore must be in each divine person, and especially in God, essentially considered; and every "attribute" of his is "perfect"; he is perfectly immutable; there is no variableness in him, nor shadow of turning, (James 1:17) he is perfect in knowledge, knows himself, and all creatures and things perfectly, (Job 37:16) and there is a depth in his wisdom, as well as in his knowledge, which are unfathomable, (Rom. 11:33) and as for his power, nothing is too hard for him; nor is his hand shortened that it cannot save, (Isa. 40:26, 28, 59:1) and his holiness is without the least tarnish; in him are "light", purity, and holiness, and "no darkness" of sin "at all", (1 John 1:5) all the perfections and excellencies that are in creatures, angels, and men, are, in the most perfect manner, in him, agreeable to his nature; as they must, since they all come from him, (James 1:17) and though there are some things which are excellencies in creatures, as the reasoning faculty in men, and faith in the Christian, which, properly speaking, cannot be said to be in God; yet these are such as would be imperfections in him; since the former supposes some want of knowledge, which the reasoning power is employed to find out, and the latter is but an obscure knowledge, and proceeds upon the authority of another; neither of which can be supposed in God, whose knowledge is clear and perfect, and to whom no authority is superior; and therefore the want of them does not infer any imperfection in him, but, on the contrary, the highest perfection. Once more, he is a rock, and "his work is perfect", (Deut. 32:4) his work of creation is finished, and so is the work of redemption, and, ere long, the mystery of providence will be finished, and the work of grace on the heart of everyone of his elect; and as for God, his way is perfect, (Ps. 18:30) his ways of providence are without any just blame; every path of mercy and truth he pursues, he never leaves till he has finished it; and the way he

prescribes to his people to walk in, is perfect; and the scriptures, which are of him, are able to make the man of God perfect, (Rev. 15:4; Ps. 25:10, 19:7; 2 Tim. 1:16, 17).

Chapter 25

OF THE BLESSEDNESS OF GOD.

That the nature of God is most blessed, as well as eternal, Epicurus himself asserted; and Velleius, an Epicurean, in Cicero, is made to say, that nothing can be thought of more blessed than the life of God, nor more abounding with all good things: he rejoices in his own wisdom and virtue, and assuredly knows that he ever shall be in the highest and eternal pleasures: this God, says he, we rightly call blessed; thought he wrongly represents him as neither doing nor designing any thing. Euryphamus, a Pythagorean philosopher, more clearly expresses himself; God, says he, needs no external cause; for he is cpoosi by nature good, and (puosi, by nature blessed, and is of himself perfect. From this attribute of blessedness the scriptures often style God the "blessed" One, and "the blessed God"; Christ is called, "the Son of the Blessed", (Mark 14:61, 62) the Creator of all things is said to be, "God blessed for ever", (Rom. 1:25; 2 Cor. 11:31; 1 Tim. 1:11) and Christ, as a divine person, is so called, (Rom. 9:5) and nothing is more common with the Jews, in their writings and prayers, than to speak of God as the holy and blessed God. This attribute may be strongly concluded from the last treated of; for if God is a sufficient, and self- sufficient, and an all-sufficient Being, he must be happy; as well as from all the perfections of God put together, before discoursed of; his simplicity, immutability, infinity, eternity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, justice, holiness, truth, and faithfulness, all-sufficiency and perfection; he that is possessed of all these, and in whom no perfection is wanting, must needs be completely blessed. It might be argued from his sovereign, extensive, and endless power and dominion; and from that light, glory, and majesty with which he is arrayed; by all which he is described, (1 Tim. 6:15, 16) "who is the blessed and only potentate", &c. he is a "potentate", has power over others, but is not under the power of any; he is higher than the highest, the most high God; he is over angels and men; he rules in his own right, in right of creation; not by a delegated power; "who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?" (Job 34:13) he has the charge of the earth, and disposes of the whole world, and all persons and things in it; but has his authority for it of himself, and not another; he has no rival, competitor, nor partner with him in his throne; he is not accountable to any, nor to be controlled by any; he is "King of kings, and Lord of lords"; and so most blessed and happy as a potentate; and as such will always continue. "Who only hath immortality" of himself, and gives it to others: and what mars the happiness of the greatest potentates on earth is, that they must and do die, like other men, (Ps. 82:6, 7) and such is his light and splendour he is clothed with, so striking and dazzling, that none can bear to come unto it, and gaze upon it; "dwelling in the light" of his own essence; for he is light itself; and such is his glory and terrible majesty, as, that "no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see"; and which glory arises not from any single perfection of his, as his holiness, or any other, but from an assemblage of them all (see Ex. 33:18, 19, 34:6, 7). In which glory lies his complete and perfect happiness; and which he gives not to another. The blessedness of God may be considered,

First, As it is in himself; and lies chiefly in these two things, in a freedom from all evils, and in the possession of all good things.

I. In a freedom from all evils; particularly, from the evil of evils, sin; and so from all the consequences of it. Sin is an evil and bitter thing in its own nature; it is exceeding sinful, and extremely pernicious; it is the source of all disorders, disasters, distresses, and calamities that befall any of the creatures; sin has made some of the angels, and Adam and his posterity, once in a most happy state, exceeding unhappy; and it is the infelicity of good men, in the present state, that sin dwells in them, which wars against there, breaks their peace and comfort, and mars their happiness, and obliges them to say, "O wretched" men that we are! but God is just and true, there is no iniquity in him, (Deut. 32:4) no darkness of this kind at all to eclipse his light, glory, and felicity: as holiness is the happiness of the elect angels, and glorified saints, who, being thoroughly holy, are completely happy; so even the most consummate and perfect holiness, is

the happiness of God; yea, he is so happy as not to be tempted with the evil of sin, nor can be, (James 1:13) whereas good men, in the present state, are often sadly harassed, and made unhappy, by Satan's temptations; being sifted by him as wheat is sifted; and so much trouble is given them, by being buffered by him, and having his fiery darts thrown at them; but God is out of the reach of all; and as he is not affected with sin, nor can be tempted to it, so he is clear from all the evil consequences of it, all hurts and damages by it. Such is his "knowledge" of all things, that he cannot make choice of anything that will be to his detriment; men, through ignorance, mistaking one thing for another, choose what is abominable, and issues in their hurt and ruin: and such is his "wisdom", that he cannot be imposed upon, circumvented, deceived, and drawn into anything that may make him unhappy; as Eve was, through the subtlety of the serpent; but "there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel, against the Lord", (Prov. 21:30) and such is his power, that he cannot be overcome, nor oppressed by any: with respect to men, there is, oftentimes, "power on the side of their oppressors", to crush and distress them, and make them unhappy; but there is no power superior to the divine Being, to do him the least hurt, or give him the least uneasiness. It has been observed, that properly speaking, there are no affections and passions in God to be wrought upon, or worked up, so as to disturb and disquiet him, as there are in creatures; such as grief and sorrow indulged, and wrath and anger provoked, and raised to a pitch; these are only ascribed to God, speaking after the manner of men; and because some things are done by God similar to what are done by men, when they are grieved and provoked to wrath, &c. otherwise, he is invariably and unchangeably the same, and so most blessed for evermore.

2. His blessedness lies in the possession of all good. He has all good in him; he comprehends all that can be called good; he stands in no need of anything; he is perfect and entire, wanting nothing; he is the fountain of all goodness; all good things come from him; he gives all things richly to enjoy; he is good, and does good, yea, he is good to all; he gives to all, and receives from none; and therefore must be happy; for "it is more blessed to give than to receive", according to the saying of Christ, (Acts 20:35) he is the "summum bonum", the chief, the chiefest good; in whom only happiness is to be found; when all nature is surveyed, and every place and thing searched into, it can be thought to be in God only, and he is found to be that; "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that desire besides thee" (Ps. 73:25). Such and such persons, in such and such circumstances, may be thought to be happy; but happy, thrice happy, are the people whose God is the Lord! who, besides the good things he bestows on them here, he has laid up such goodness for them hereafter, which the heart of man cannot conceive of. How blessed and happy then must he himself be! name whatsoever it may be thought happiness consists in, and it will be found in God in its full perfection. Does it lie in grandeur and dominion? with God is terrible majesty; he is the blessed and only potentate; his kingdom rules over all, and is an everlasting one. Does it lie in wealth and riches? "The gold is mine, and the silver is mine, saith the Lord", (Hag. 2:8) all the gold and silver in the world, that, and all the fullness of it, are his; the riches of both Indies are his property; the mines and metals of the earth, the fowls of the heaven, the beasts of the field, and "the cattle on a thousand hills", in the latter of which the substance of men formerly lay (Ps. 24:1, 50:10-12). Does it lie in wisdom and knowledge, where Solomon sought for happiness, and had of all men the greatest share of it? these are in God in the highest perfection; "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. 11:33). Does it lie in might, power, and strength, as Samson's excellency did? God is "mighty in strength: if I speak of strength", says Job, "Lo, he is strong"; there is no strength nor power comparable to his; "Who is a strong Lord like unto thee?" (Job 9:4, 19; Ps. 89:8). Does it lie in pleasure; in which also Solomon sought for it, but found it not? "In the presence of God is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore", (Ps. 16:11) and if such as to make his creatures happy, angels and men, then certainly to make himself happy also. Does it lie in fame, in credit, and the high esteem of others? How excellent is the name of God in all the earth! his works praise him, his saints bless him, angels celebrate his glory; yea, his glory is above the heavens; his name is great from the rising of the

sun to the going down of the same. To happiness knowledge is necessary; whatever excellencies may be in creatures, if they know them not, they are not happy in them. Hence happiness is denied of brutes; for though there are many things which they excel in, as strength, swiftness, &c. as the horse and the mule, yet being without understanding, are not happy: but God knows all the excellencies and perfections in his nature; there is no searching of his understanding, and therefore most happy. That happiness is the greatest which is independent; the happiness of angels and men is dependent on God; they have nothing but what they have received, and therefore cannot glory, as though they received it not; and this is a restraint upon, and a limitation of their happiness: but the happiness of God is infinite and independent; of him, and through him, and for him, are all things (Rom. 11:36). Add to all this, that his blessedness endures for ever; he is God blessed for ever, from everlasting to everlasting: could his happiness cease, or be known that it would, it would detract from it, even for the present; but this can no more cease than his Being.

Secondly, What may serve further to prove and illustrate the blessedness of God is, that he is the cause of all blessedness in his creatures, angels and men. Angels have their beings from him; it is he that has made them the spirits they are, and what excellencies, as of wisdom, knowledge, strength, &c. they have, are all from him; that they are chosen in Christ, and confirmed by grace in him, see the face of God, and enjoy his favour, in which their greatest blessedness lies, all flow from his sovereign will and pleasure. The temporal happiness of men is from him; that they have a being, are preserved in it, and have all the necessaries and comforts of life; that they are blessed in basket and store; that they have health and wealth, and an increase in their families, flocks, and herds; on account of which it behooves them to say, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits" (Ps. 68:19). Their spiritual blessings come from him, who is himself their covenant God and Father, the chief of their blessings, and therefore cannot want any good thing, nor need fear any evil they have Christ, and all the blessings of goodness with him; the Spirit, and all his graces, faith, hope, and love, joy and peace; the blessings of pardoning grace, and a justifying righteousness, and in which their blessedness greatly lies, and from whence peace and comfort flow (Rom. 4:6-8, 5:1, 11). They are blessed also with the word and ordinances; which are the means of increasing grace, and spiritual peace; and hereafter will be blessed with eternal happiness; with the blessed hope, or the blessedness laid up in heaven, they are hoping for, which they enter upon at death, and enjoy to all eternity. Now if such blessedness comes from God, how blessed must he be in himself!

Thirdly, God is his own blessedness; it is wholly within himself and of himself; he receives none from without himself, or from his creatures; nothing that can add to his happiness; and he himself is the blessedness of his creatures, who are made happy by him; whose blessedness lies in likeness to him; which is begun in this life, in regeneration; when newly born souls are made partakers of the divine nature, is increased by sights of the glory of God in Christ, and will be perfected in the future state, when they shall awake in his likeness, and bear his image in a more perfect manner: and also it lies in communion with God; it is the happiness of saints now, and what they exult in, when they enjoy it, that their fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ; and it will be the blessedness of the new Jerusalem state, that the tabernacle of God will be with men, and he will dwell with them; and of the ultimate glory the saints shall then have, everlasting and uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, and partake of endless pleasures in the divine presence: and it will, moreover, lie in the vision of God; which, because of the happiness of it, is usually called the beatific vision; when they shall "see God for themselves, and not another"; see him as he is in Christ, and behold the glory of Christ; see no more darkly through a glass, but face to face, and know as they are known. Wherefore,

Fourthly, God is pronounced, declared, and owned to be blessed, by all his creatures; hence the frequent form of blessing him used, "Blessed be the Lord God", &c. (Gen. 9:26; Ps. 72:18; Luke 1:68; Eph. 1:3). Thus he is blessed by angels, who, as they are called upon to bless him, do ascribe honour, glory, and blessing to him, (Ps. 103:20; Rev. 5:11, 12, 7:11, 12) and by the saints, who call upon their souls, and all within them, to bless his holy name for all benefits

bestowed upon them (Ps. 103:1-3, 145:10). Which is done, not by invoking a blessing on him; for there is none greater than he, to invoke and ask one of, much less by conferring any upon him; for as he needs none, a creature can give him nothing but what is his own. Besides, without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the greater; the creature of the Creator, and not the Creator of the creature: but this is done by congratulating his greatness and blessedness, and ascribing it to him, and praising him for all blessings, temporal and spiritual, bestowed on them by him; and which, as they come from him, are proofs of the blessedness that is in him. And here ends the account of the attributes of God; which all centre and terminate in his blessedness.

Chapter 26

OF THE UNITY OF GOD

Having treated of the attributes of God, I shall now proceed to prove that this God, who is possessed of all these great and glorious perfections, is but "one". This is a first principle, and not to be doubted of; it is a most certain truth, most surely to be believed, and with the greatest confidence to be asserted; as he is a fool that says there is no God, he is equally so, who says there are more than one; and, indeed, as Tertullian observes, if God is not one, he is not at all. This is the first and chief commandment which God has given, and requires an assent and obedience to; on which all religion, doctrine, and faith depend, (Mark 12:28-30) it is the voice both of reason and revelation; it is discernible by the light of nature; what teaches men there is a God, teaches them there is but one: and though when men neglected the true God, and his worship, and liked not to retain him in their knowledge, he gave them up to a reprobate mind, to judicial blindness, to believe the Father of lies, who led them on by degrees into the grossest idolatry; yet the wiser and better sort of them, though they complied with the custom of countries in which they lived, and paid a lesser sort of worship to the rabble of inferior deities, in which they are not at all to be excused from idolatry; yet they held and owned one supreme Being, whom they often call the Father of the gods and men; the chief God with the Assyrians, as Macrobius relates, was called Adad; which, he says, signifies "one"; and with the Phoenicians, Adodus, the King of the gods; the same with II1X, "one". That there is but one God, is an article in the Jewish Creed, and which still continues; and no wonder, since it stands in such a glaring light in the writings of the Old Testament, and is as clearly and as strongly asserted in the New; so that "we" Christians "know" assuredly, "that there is none God but one" (1 Cor. 8:4). It is a truth agreed on by all, by Jews and Gentiles; by Jewish doctors, and heathen poets and philosophers; by Old and New Testament saints; by the holy angels; and even by the devils themselves: it must be right and well to believe it. The apostle James commends the faith of it; "Thou belie vest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble" (James 2:19). But I go on,

First, To give the proof of this doctrine; which may be taken partly from express passages of scripture, both in the Old and New Testament (see Deut. 6:4; Ps. 86:10; Isa. 43:10, 44:6, 8, 45:5, 6, 14, 18, 21, 22, 46:9; Mark 12:29; John 17:3; Rom. 3:30; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:5). The sense of these scriptures will be observed hereafter; and partly from the perfections of God, and his relations to his creatures. The necessary existence of God is a proof of his unity. The existence of God must be either of necessity, or of will and choice; if of will and choice, then it must be either of the will and choice of another, or of his own; not of another, for then that other would be prior and superior to him, and so be God, and not he: not of his own will and choice, for then he must be before himself, and be and not be at the same instant; which is such an absurdity and contradiction as is not to be endured. It remains, therefore, that he necessarily exists; and if so, there can be but one God; for no reason can be given why there should be, or can be, more than one necessarily existent Being. God is the first Being, the cause of all other beings; he is the first Cause, and last End of all things; the mind of man, from effects, rises to the knowledge of causes; and from one cause, to the cause of that; and so proceeds on until it arrives to the first Cause, which is without a cause, and is what is truly called God; and as therefore there is but one first Cause, there can be but one God; so, according to Pythagoras and Plato, unity is the principle of all things. God, the first Cause, who is without a cause, and is the Cause of all,

is independent; all owe their existence to him, and so depend upon him for the preservation, continuance, and comfort of their being; all live, and move, and have their being in him; but he, receiving his being from none, is independent of any; which can only be said of one; there is but one independent Being, and therefore but one God. God is an eternal Being, before all things, from everlasting to everlasting; and there can be but one. Eternal, and so but one God; "before me", says he, "there was no God formed; neither shall there be after me", (Isa. 43:10) if then no other, then but one God. God is infinite and incomprehensible; as he is not bounded by time, so not by space; he is not contained or included anywhere, nor comprehended by any. To suppose two infinites, the one must either reach unto, comprehend, and include the other, or not; if it does not, then it is not infinite, and so not God; if it does reach unto, comprehend, and include the other, then that which is comprehended, and included by it, is finite, and so not God; therefore it is clear there cannot be more infinites than one; and if but one infinite, then but one God. Omnipotence is a perfection of God; he claims this title to himself, The Lord God almighty: now there cannot be more than one Almighty; omnipotence admits of no degrees; it cannot be said, there is one that is almighty, and another that is more almighty, and a third that is most almighty; there is but one Almighty, and so but one God, who can do all things whatsoever he pleases; nothing is too hard, too difficult, or impossible to him; nor can any turn back his hand, or stay and stop him from acting. To suppose two almighties, either the one can lay a restraint upon the other, and hinder him from acting, or he cannot; if he cannot, then he is not almighty, the other is mightier than he; if he can, then he on whom the restraint is laid, and is hindered from acting, is not almighty, and so not God; and therefore there can be but one God. God is good, essentially, originally, and inderivatively; the source and fountain of all goodness; "There is none good but me", says Christ, "that is, God", (Matthew 19:17) and therefore but one God. The heathens call their supreme God "Optimus", the best; and there call be none better than the best. He is the "summum bonum", the chief good; and that is but one, and therefore but one God. God is a perfect Being; "your heavenly Father", says Christ, "is perfect", (Matthew 5:48) he is perfect and entire, wanting nothing, completely perfect: now if there are more gods than one, there must be some essential difference by which they are distinguished from one another, and that must be either an excellency or an imperfection; if the latter, then he to whom it belongs is not God, because not perfect; if the former, he in whom it is, is distinguished from all others in whom it is not, and so is the one and only God. The true God is E1-Shaddai", God all-sufficient, stands in need of nothing; for of him, and by him, and for him, are all things. All-sufficiency can only be said of One, of Him who is the first Cause and last End of all things; and which, as he is but one, so but one God. Once more, There is but one Creator; whom all receive their beings from, are supported by, and accountable to, (Mai. 2:10) but one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy, (James 4:12) one King and Governor of the world; one kingdom, which belongs to him; who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Were there more than one, the greatest confusion would be introduced in the world; if there were more than one that had the sovereign sway, different and contrary laws, edicts, and decrees, might be published, and subjects would not know whom they were to obey, and what their duty to be performed by them; or whose laws they should pay a regard unto. I proceed,

Secondly, To explain the sense in which this article of one God is to be understood. And, 2a. First, It is not to be understood in the Arian sense, that there is one supreme God, and two subordinate or inferior ones. This is no other than what is the notion of the better and wiser sort of pagans, as before observed: and if revelation carries us no further than what the light of nature discovers, and that since the fall, and in its corrupt state, we gain nothing by it, with respect to the knowledge of God; nor are the expressions concerning the unity of the divine Being, which are in the Scriptures levelled so much against the notion of more supreme gods, which is a notion that could never prevail much among the heathens; and is so absurd and contradictory, that there is no danger of mens' giving into it; but against petty and inferior deities men might be tempted to embrace and worship. Besides, if two subordinate and inferior deities may be admitted, consistent with one God, why not two

hundred, or two thousand? no reason can be given why the one should not stand as much excluded as the other: and again, those deities are either creators or creatures; if creators, then they are the one supreme God; for to create is peculiar to him; but if creatures, for there is no medium between the Creator and the creature, then they are not gods that made the heavens and the earth; and so come under the imprecation of the prophet, "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish, or may they perish from the earth, and from under these heavens", (Jer. 10:11) to which may be added, that such are not entitled to religious worship, which would be worshipping the creature besides and together with the Creator, and would be a breach of the first command, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Rom. 1:25; Ex. 20:1, 2). 2b. Nor is this article to be understood in the Sabellian sense, that God is but one person; for though there is but one God, there are three persons in the Godhead, which the Sabellians deny; who are so called from one Sabellius who lived in the middle of the third century; though this notion was breached before him by Noetus, whose followers were called Noetians and Patripassians, asserting, in consequence of their principles, that the Father became incarnate, suffered, and died: and before them Victorinus and Praxeas were much of the same opinion, against whom Tertullian wrote, and who speaks of one sort of the Cataphrygians who held that Jesus Christ was both Son and Father; and even it may be traced up as high as Simon Magus, who asserted that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were only different names of one and the same person, according to his different way of operation: and as before his pretended conversion he gave out that he was some great one, (Acts 8:9) so he did afterwards, and said he was the Father in Samaria, the Son in Judea, and the Holy Ghost in the rest of the nations. Our Socinians and modern Unitarians are much of the same sentiment with the Sabellians in this respect; and some who profess evangelical doctrines have embraced it, or are nibbling at it; fancying they have got new light, when they have only imbibed an old stale-error, an ancient work of darkness, which has been confuted over and over. If the Father, Son, and Spirit, were but one person, they could not be three testifiers, as they are said to be, (1 John 5:7) to testify is a personal action; and if the Father is one that bears record, the Son another, and the Holy Ghost a third, they must be three persons, and not One only; and when Christ says, "I and my Father are one", (John 10:30) he cannot mean one person, for this is to make him say what is the most absurd and contradictory; as that I and myself are one, or that I am one, and my Father who is another, are one person; but of this more hereafter. 2c. Nor is this doctrine to be understood in a Tritheistic sense, that is, that there are three essences or beings numerically distinct, which maybe said to be one, because of the same nature; as free men may be said to be one, because of the same human nature; but this is to assert three Gods and not one; this the Trinitarians indeed are often charged with, and they as often deny the charge; for though they affirm the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, yet not that they are three Gods, but one God. For, 2d. They assert, that there is but one divine essence, undivided, and common to Father, Son, and Spirit, and in this sense but one God; since there is but one essence, though there are different modes of subsisting in it which are called persons; and these possess the whole essence undivided; that is to say, not that the Father has one part, the Son another, and the Holy Spirit a third; but as the whole fulness of the Godhead dwells in the Father, so in the Son, who has all that the Father has, (John 15:16; Col. 2:9) and so in the Spirit, and therefore but one God. This unity of them is not an unity of testimony only; for it is not said of them as of the three that bear record on earth, that they "agree in one", but that they "are one", (1 John 5:7, 8) but it is an unity of nature; they have one and the same infinite and undivided nature; and this unity is not an unity of parts, which makes one compositum, as the body and soul of man do; for God is a simple and uncompounded Spirit; nor an unity of genus and species, under which may be many singulars of the same kind, but God is one in number and nature, and stands opposed to the polytheism of the heathens, who had gods many and lords many, (1 Cor. 8:4, 5) and to all nominal and figurative deities, as angels, civil magistrates, judges, &c. even to all who are not by nature God (Gal. 4:8). Nor is this unity of God to be objected to and set aside by the many names of God, as El, Elohim, Jehovah,

&c. since these are names of the one God, as one and the same man may have different names, and yet but one; nor by the "many attributes" of God, which do not differ from him, nor from one another, but are all one in God, and are himself; though distinctly considered by us, because our understandings are too weak to take them in as in the gross, but to consider them apart, as has been observed. Nor by the "persons" in the Godhead being more than one; for though three persons, they differ not from the divine essence, nor from one another, but by their distinctive modes of subsisting, and are but one God. Nor are those passages of scripture which assert the unity of God to be appropriated to one person only, to the exclusion of the others; but to be considered as including each. The famous passage in Deuteronomy 6:4 which is introduced in a solemn manner, exciting attention, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord!" and which Christ refers the scribe to as the first and chief command, (Mark 12:28, 29) asserts that there is but one Jehovah; but not that this is peculiar to the Father, and as exclusive of the Son and Spirit; for Christ the Son of God is Jehovah, and is often so called (see Ex. 17:7; Num. 21:6 compared with 1 Cor. 10:9; Jer. 23:6; Zech. 12:10) and so the Holy Ghost, (Isa. 6:1, 5, 8, 9 compared with Acts 28:25, 26 and these) with the Father, are the one Lord or Jehovah; and are manifestly included in Elohenu, a word of the plural number, and may be rendered our Gods, or rather our divine persons are one Lord; for Christ the Son is one of them, who is that God whose throne is for ever and ever; and the Spirit that God, or divine person, who anointed Christ as man, (Ps. 45:6, 7) and that the three divine persons who are the one Jehovah are here meant, is not only the sense of Christian writers but even of the ancient Jews and besides, the Son and Spirit are entitled to the same sincere and fervent love of men as the Father, and which is required to be given to the one Jehovah, even Father, Son, and Spirit. The several passages in Isaiah before referred to, and which so strongly assert the unity of the Divine Being, cannot be understood to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit. In one of them, (Isa. 44:6) the only Lord God calls himself "the first and the last", a title which also Christ the Son of God claims as his, (Rev. 1:8) yea in the same passage the one God styles himself the Redeemer, a name very peculiar to the Son, who agreed to be the Redeemer; came in the fullness of time as such, and has obtained eternal redemption for men: and in another of those passages, (Isa. 45:21) the only Lord God is spoken of as a Saviour; and in (Isa. 45:22) Christ is represented as a Saviour inviting and encouraging persons to look to him for salvation, enforcing it with this reason, for I am God, and there is none else: now as the Father cannot be supposed to be excluded hereby, so neither should the Son and Spirit be thought to be excluded by similar expressions elsewhere; besides, the following verse (Isa. 45:23) is manifestly applied to Christ by the Apostle (Rom. 14:10, 11). The words of our Lord Jesus Christ, (John 17:3) which affirm the Father to be the only true God, cannot be understood to the exclusion of himself; "this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent": since Christ also is called the only Lord God, (Jude 1:4) and the true God and eternal life, (1 John 5:20) nor would he have joined himself so closely with the only true God, if he was not so; but he thought it no robbery to be equal with him, yea one with him; of the same nature, power, and glory; and besides, eternal life is made as much to depend on the knowledge of Christ as of his Father; (see John 6:47, 53, 54) the reason of this mode of expression, distinguishing the one from the other, is because Christ is described by his office as sent of God. In Romans 3:30 it is said, "It is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith"; that is, there is one God of Jews and Gentiles, which this is said to prove, (Rom. 3:29) but Christ cannot stand excluded from the one God that justifies, since he is Jehovah our righteousness, and the Sun of righteousness, (Jer. 23:6; Mai. 4:2) and it is not only his righteousness by which men are justified, Jews and Gentiles; but he himself justifies them by his knowledge, that is, by faith, (Isa. 53:11) nor the Holy Spirit, who brings near Christ's righteousness, and applies it; works faith to receive it, and pronounces men justified by it (1 Cor. 6:11). The text in (1 Cor. 8:6) which expresses the faith of Christians, there is "but one God the Father, of whom are all things", stands opposed not to any other persons in the Godhead, but to the many lords and gods among the heathens, (1 Cor. 8:5) nor is the Father

called the Father of Christ, or opposed to him, but the Father of all; that is, the Creator; see (Mai. 2:10) in which character, the Son and Spirit are included (Eccl. 12:1). Besides, if Christ could be thought to stand excluded from the one God, the Father, by the same rule of interpretation, God the Father must stand excluded from the one Lord, said of Christ in the same text; and these observations may be applied to (Eph. 4:5, 6) and will serve to clear and explain the words there to the same sense. It is also said in (1 Tim. 2:5) that "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus": now the reason why Christ is spoken of as distinct from the one God, though not different, is for the sake of the mention of him in his office as Mediator; but then if he was not the one God, with the other divine persons; or the true God, and the great God, he could not be a Mediator between God and man; he could not be a daysman between them, and lay his hands on both; he could not draw nigh to God, and entreat with him about peace and reconciliation; and much less make peace for men, and be a ransom for them; as in the following verse: but after all, though there are three persons in the Godhead, as will more clearly appear hereafter, and none of them stand excluded from Deity, yet there is but one God; this is an article that must be inviolably maintained. The doctrine of the unity of the divine Being, is of great importance in religion; especially in the affair of worship. God, the one only God, is the object of it. This is the sense of the first and second Commands, which forbid owning any other God but one, and the worship of any creature whatever, angels or men, or any other creature, and the likeness of them; which to do is to worship the creature, besides, or along with the Creator. But this hinders not but that the Son and Spirit may have acts of worship performed to them, equally as to the Father; and for this reason, because they are, with him, the one God; hence baptism is administered equally, in the name of all Three; and prayer is jointly made unto them; both solemn acts of religious worship (see Matthew 28:19; Rev. 1:4,5). And this doctrine of the unity of the divine Being, as it fixes and settles the object of worship, so being closely attended to, it guides the mind right in the consideration of it, while worshipping, without any confusion and division in it; for let the direction, or address, be to which person it may, as each may be distinctly addressed; be it to the Father, he is considered in the act of worship, as the one God, with the Son and Spirit; if the address is to the Son, he is considered as the one God, with the Father and the Spirit; or if the address is to the Spirit, he is considered as the one God, with the Father and Son. And this doctrine also serves to fix and settle the object of our faith, hope, and love, without division and distraction of mind; which are not to be exercised on different objects, and to be divided between them; but are to centre in one object, the one only true God, Father, Son, and Spirit; whom alone we are to make our confidence, our hope, and the centre of our affections (Jer. 17:7; Ps. 73:25). As well as this doctrine carries a strong and powerful argument to promote unity, harmony, and concord among the saints; for which it is used in Ephesians 4:3-6.

Chapter 27

OF A PLURALITY IN THE GODHEAD OR, A TRINITY OF PERSONS IN THE UNITY OF THE DIVINE ESSENCE

Having proved the unity of the divine Being, and explained the sense in which it is to be understood; my next work will be to prove that there is a plurality in the Godhead; or, that there are more persons than one, and that these are neither more, nor fewer, than three; or, that there is a Trinity of Persons in the unity of the divine essence. Some except to these terms, because not literally and syllabically expressed in scripture; as Essence, Unity, Trinity, and Person; of which see the Introduction, see topic (point 5), 741, 1 shall,

First, Prove that there is a plurality of persons in the one God; or, that there are more than one. The Hebrew word â–¡'OS which answers to the Greek word 7tpocco7ta, is used of the divine persons, â€œGS "My persons shall go with thee", (Ex.. 33:14) and if â€œfâ€™3S "thy persons go not with me, (Ex.. 33:15) and "he brought thee out T3ED by his persons", (Deut. 4:37). The word is used three times in (Ps. 27:8, 9) and in each clause the Septuagint has the word npoaconov, and which, as Suidas observes, is expressive of the sacred Trinity. That there is such a plurality of persons, will appear more clearly,

l. From the plural names and epithets of God. His

great and incommunicable name Jehovah, is always in the singular number, and is never used plurally; the reason of which is, because it is expressive of his essence, which is but one; it is the same with "I AM that I AM"; but the first name of God we meet with in scripture, and that in the first verse of it, is plural; "In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heaven and the earth", (Gen. 1:1) and therefore must design more than one, at least two, and yet not precisely two, or two only; then it would have been dual; but it is plural; and, as the Jews themselves say, cannot design fewer than three. Now Moses might have made use of other names of God, in his account of the creation; as his name Jehovah, by which he made himself known to him, and to the people of Israel; or Eloah, the singular of Elohim, which is used by him, (Deut. 32:15, 16) and in the book of Job frequently; so that it was not want of singular names of God, nor the barrenness of the Hebrew language, which obliged him to use a plural word; it was no doubt of choice, and with design; and which will be more evident when it is observed, that one end of the writings of Moses is to extirpate the polytheism of the heathens, and to prevent the people of Israel from going into it; and therefore it may seem strange, that he should begin his history with a plural name of God; he must have some design in it, which could not be to inculcate a plurality of gods, for that would be directly contrary to what he had in view in writing, and to what he asserts, (Deut. 6:4). "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord": nor a plurality of mere names and characters, to which creative powers cannot be ascribed; but a plurality of persons, for so the words may be rendered, distributively, according to the idiom of the Hebrew language; "In the beginning everyone, or each of the divine persons, created the heaven and the earth". And then the historian goes on to make mention of them; who, besides the Father, included in this name, are the Spirit of God, that moved upon the face of the waters, and the word of God, (Gen. 1:2) which said, "Let there be light, and there was light"; and which spoke that, and all things, out of nothing; see (John 1:1-3). And it may be further observed, that this plural word Elohim, is, in this passage, in construction with a verb singular, "bara", rendered "created"; which some have thought is designed to point out a plurality of persons, in the unity of the divine essence: but if this is not judged sufficient to build it upon, let it be further observed, that the word Elohim is sometimes in construction with a verb plural, as in (Gen. 20:13; Gen. 35:7; 2 Sam. 7:23) where Elohim, the gods, or divine persons, are said to cause Abraham to wander from his father's house; to appear to Jacob; and to go forth to redeem Israel: all which are personal actions: and likewise it is in construction with adjectives and participles plural, (Deut. 4:7, 5:26; Josh. 24:19; 2 Sam. 7:26, 27; Ps. 58:11, Prov. 30:3; Jer. 10:10) in which places Elohim, gods, or the divine persons, are said to be nigh to the people of Israel; to be living, holy, and to judge in the earth; characters which belong to persons; and now, as a learned man well observes, "that however the construction of a noun plural with a verb singular, may render it doubtful to some whether these words express a plurality or not, yet certainly there can be no doubt in those places, where a verb or adjective plural are joined with the word Elohim". No such stress is laid on this word, as if it was the clearest and strongest proof of a plurality in the Deity; it is only mentioned, and mentioned first, because it is the most usual name of God, being used of him many hundreds of times in scripture; and what stress is laid upon it, is not merely because it is plural, but because it appears often in an unusual form of construction; it is used of others, but not in such a form; as has been observed. It is used of angels, (Ps. 8:5) they being not only many, but are often messengers of God, of the divine Persons in the Godhead, represent them, and speak in their name. And it is used of civil magistrates, (Ps. 82:6) and so of Moses, as a god to Pharaoh, (Ex. 7:1) as they well may be called, since they are the vicegerents and representatives of the Elohim, the divine Persons, the Triune God; nor need it be wondered at, that it should be sometimes used of a single Person in the Deity, it being common to them all; and since each of them possess the whole divine nature and essence undivided, (Ps. 45:6, 7). The ancient Jews not only concluded a plurality, but even a Trinity, from the word Elohim. With respect to the passage in (Num. 15:16) they say, "There is no judgment less than three"; and that three persons sitting in judgment, the divine Majesty is with them, they conclude from (Ps. 82:1) "he judgeth among the gods", DTlbx. Hence they further

observes, that "no sanhedrin, or court of judicature, is called DVlbx unless it consists of three". From whence it is manifest, that the ancient Jews believed that this name not only inferred a plurality of persons, but such a plurality which consisted of three at least. Another plural name of God is Adonim; "If I am (Adoaim) Lords, where is my fear?" (Mai.. 1:6) now, though this may be said of one in the second and third persons plural, yet never of one in the first person, as it is here said of God by himself; "I am Lords"; and we are sure there are two, "The Lord said to my Lord", &c. (Ps. 110:1). In Daniel 4:17 the most high God is called the watchers and the Holy Ones; "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the Holy Ones"; which respects the revolution and destruction of the Babylonian monarchy; an affair of such moment and importance as not to be ascribed to angels, which some understand by watchers and Holy Ones; but however applicable these epithets may be to them, and they may be allowed to be the executioners of the decrees of God, yet not the makers of them; nor can anything in this world, and much less an affair of such consequence as this, be said to be done in virtue of any decree of theirs: besides, this decree is expressly called, the decree of the most High, (Dan. 4:24) so that the watchers and Holy Ones, are no other than the divine Persons in the Godhead; who are holy in their nature, and watch over the saints to do them good; and over the wicked, to bring evil upon them: and as they are so called in the plural number, to express the plurality of them in the Deity; so to preserve the unity of the divine essence, this same decree is called, the decree of the most High, (Dan. 4:24) and they the watcher and Holy One, in the singular number in (Dan. 4:13).

2. A plurality in the Deity may be proved from plural expressions used by God, when speaking of himself, respecting the works of creation, providence, and grace. At the creation of man he said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness", (Gen. 1:26) the pronouns "us" and "our", manifestly express a plurality of persons; these being personal plural characters; as image and likeness being in the singular number, secure the unity of the divine essence; and that there were more than one concerned in the creation of man, is clear from the plural expressions used of the divine Being, when he is spoken of as the Creator of men, (Job 35:10; Ps. 149:2; Eccl. 12:1; Isa.. 54:5) in all which places, in the original text, it is my Makers, his Makers, thy Creators, thy Makers; for which no other reason can be given, than that more persons than one had an hand herein; as for the angels, they are creatures themselves, and not possessed of creative powers; nor were they concerned in the creation of man, nor was he made after their image and likeness; nor can it be reasonably thought, that God spoke to them, and held a consultation with them about it; for "with whom took he counsel?" (Isa. 40:14). Not with any of his creatures; no, not with the highest angel in heaven; they are not of his privy council. Nor is it to be thought that God, in the above passage, speaks "regio more", after the manner of kings; who, in their edicts and proclamations, use the plural number, to express their honour and majesty; and even they are not to be considered alone, but as connotating their ministers and privy council, by whose advice they act; and, besides, this courtly way of speaking, was not so ancient as the times of Moses; none of the kings of Israel use if; nor even any of those proud and haughty monarchs, Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar; the first appearance of it is in the letters of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, (Ezra 4:18, 7:23) which might take its rise from the conjunction of Darius and Cyrus, in the Persian empire, in both whose names edicts might be made, and letters wrote; which might give rise to such a way of speaking, and be continued by their successors, to express their power and glory: but, as a learned man observes, "it is a very extravagant fancy, to suppose that Moses alludes to a custom that was not (for what appears) in being at that time, nor a great while after." The Jews themselves are sensible that this passage furnishes with an argument for a plurality in the Deity. A like way of speaking is used concerning men, in (Gen. 3:22). "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us"; not as one of the angels, for they are not of the Deity, nor the companions of God, and equal to him; for whatever private secret meaning Satan might have in saying, "Ye shall be as gods"; he would have it understood by Eve, and so she understood it, that they should be not like the angels merely, but like God himself; this was the bait he laid, and which took, and proved man's ruin; upon which

the Lord God said these words either sarcastically, "Behold the man whom Satan promised, and he expected to be as one of us, as one of the persons in the Deity; see how much he looks like one of us! who but just now ran away from us in fear and trembling, and covered himself with fig leaves, and now stands before us clothed with skins of slain beasts!" or else as comparing his former and present state together; for the words may be rendered, "he was as one of us"; made after their image and likeness: but what is he now? he has sinned, and come short of that glorious image; has lost his honour, and is become like the beasts that perish, whose skins he now wears. Philo, the Jew, owns that these words are to be understood not of one, but of more; the sv Kai noXXa, the "one" and "many", so much spoken of by the Pythagoreans and Platonists; and which Plato speaks of as infinite and eternal, and of the knowledge of them as the gift of the gods; and which, he says, was delivered to us by the ancients; who were better than we, and lived nearer the gods; by whom he seems to intend the ancient Jews; this, I say, though understood by their followers of the unity of God, and the many ideas in him, the same with what we call decrees; I take to be no other than the one God, and a plurality of persons in the Deity; which was the faith of the ancient Jews; so that the noXXa, of Plato, and others, is the same with the n>o|0o<; of Philo, who was a great Platonizer; and both intend a plurality of persons. God sometimes uses the plural number when speaking of himself, with respect to some particular affairs of providence, as the confusion of languages; "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language"; which also cannot be said to angels; had it, it would rather have been, go "ye", and do "ye" confound their language: but, alas! this work was above the power of angels to do; none but God, that gave to man the faculty of speech, and the use of language, could confound it; which was as great an instance of divine power, as to bestow the gift of tongues on the apostles, at Pentecost; and the same God that did the one, did the other; and so the us here, are after explained of Jehovah, in the following verse, to whom the confounding the language of men, and scattering them abroad on the face of the earth, are ascribed, (Acts 2:8-11). In another affair of providence, smiting the Jewish nation with judicial blindness; this plural way of speaking is used by the divine Being; says the prophet Isaiah, "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Isa. 6:8) not the seraphim say this, but Jehovah; for to them neither the name Jehovah, nor the work agree; and though there is but one Jehovah that here speaks, yet more persons than one are intended by him; of Christ, the Son of God no question can be made, since the Evangelist applies them to him; and observes, that Isaiah said the words when he saw his glory, and spoke of him, (John 12:40, 41) nor of the Holy Ghost, to whom they are also applied (Acts 28:25, 26). There is another passage in Isaiah 41:21-23 where Jehovah, the King of Jacob, challenges the heathens, and their gods, to bring proof of their Deity, by prediction of future events; and, in which, he all along uses the plural number; "show us what shall happen, that we may consider them; declare unto us things for to come, that we may know that ye, are gods, and that we may be dismayed; " See also Isaiah 43:9. And as in the affairs of creation and providence, so in those of grace, and with respect to spiritual communion with God, plural expressions are used; as when our Lord says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him", (John 14:23) which personal actions of coming and making abode, expressive of communion and fellowship, are said of more than one; and we cannot be at a loss about two of them, Christ and his Father, who are expressly mentioned; and hence we read of fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ; and also of the communion of the Holy Ghost, (1 John 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:14). To all these instances of plural expressions, may be added (Song 1:11; John 3:11).

3. A plurality in the Deity may be proved from those passages of scripture which speak of the angel of Jehovah, who also is Jehovah; now if there is a Jehovah that is sent, and therefore called an angel, and a Jehovah that sends, there must be more persons than one who are Jehovah. The first instance of this kind is in Genesis 16:7, where the angel of Jehovah is said to find Hagar, Sarah's maid, in the wilderness, and bid her return to her mistress; which angel appears to be Jehovah, since he promises to do that for her, and acquaints her with future things, which no created

angel, and none but Jehovah could, (Gen. 16:10-12) and what proves it beyond all dispute that he must be Jehovah, is, what is said, (Gen. 16:13) "She called the name of the Lord, or Jehovah, that spake unto her, thou; God, seest". In Genesis 18:2 we read of three men who stood by Abraham in the plains of Mamre, who were angels in an human form, as two of them are expressly said to be (Gen. 19:1). Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, that they were the three divine Persons; and scruples not to say, that at such a time the Trinity dined with Abraham; but the Father, and the Holy Spirit, never assumed an human form; nor are they ever called angels. However, one of these was undoubtedly a divine Person, the Son of God in an human form; who is expressly called Jehovah, the Judge of all the earth, (Gen. 18:13, 20, 25, 26) and to whom omnipotence and omniscience are ascribed, (Gen. 18:14, 17-19) and to whom Abraham showed the utmost reverence and respect, (Gen. 18:27, 30, 31) and now he is distinguished, being Jehovah in human form on earth, from Jehovah in heaven, from whom he is said to rain brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, (Gen. 19:24) which conflagration was not made by the ministry of created angels, but is always represented as the work of Elohim, of the divine Persons (Jer. 50:40; Amos 4:11). An angel also appeared to Abraham at the offering up of his son Isaac, and bid him desist from it; and who appears plainly to be the same with him who ordered him to do it; expressly called God, (Gen. 22:11, 12 compared with Gen. 22:1, 2) and Jehovah, who swore by himself, and promised to do what none but God could do, (Gen. 22:16-18; Heb. 6:13, 14) where what is here said is expressly ascribed to God. Add to this, the name Abraham gave the place on this occasion, Jehovah-Jireh, because the Lord had appeared, and would hereafter appear in this place. The angel invoked by Jacob, (Gen. 48:15, 16) is put upon a level with the God of his fathers Abraham and Isaac; yea, is represented as the same; and the work of redeeming him from all evil, equal to that of feeding him all his life long, is ascribed to him; as well as a blessing on the sons of Joseph, is prayed for from him; all which would never have been said of, nor done to, a created angel. The angel which appeared to Moses in the bush, (Ex. 3:2) was not a created angel, but a divine person; as is evident from the names by which he is called, Jehovah, God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "I AM that I AM", (Ex. 3:4, 6, 14) and from the things ascribed to him; seeing the afflictions of the Israelites, coming to deliver them out of Egyptian bondage, and promising to bring them into the land of Canaan, (Ex. 3:7, 8) to which may be added, the prayer of Moses for a blessing on Joseph, because of the good will of him that dwelt in the bush, (Deut. 33:16) and the application of this passage to God, by our Lord Jesus Christ, (Mark 12:26). Once more, the angel that was promised to go before the children of Israel, to keep and guide them in the way through the wilderness to the land of Canaan, is no other than Jehovah; since not only the obedience of the children of Israel to him is required; but it is suggested, that should they disobey him, he would not, though he could, pardon their iniquities; which none but God can do: and also it is said, the name of the Lord was in him; that is, his nature and perfections; and since it is the same the children of Israel rebelled against, he could be no other than Christ, the Son of God, whom they tempted; the angel of God's presence; who, notwithstanding, saved and carried them all the days of old (Isa. 63:9; 1 Cor. 10:9). Again, we read of the angel of the Lord, before whom Joshua the high priest was brought and stood, being accused by Satan, (Zech. 3:1) who is not only called Jehovah, (Zech. 3:2) but takes upon him to do and order such things, which none but God could do; as causing the iniquity of Joshua to pass from him, and clothing him with change of raiment (see Isa. 61:10). To these may be added, all such scriptures which speak of two, as distinct from each other, under the same name of Jehovah; as in the above mentioned text, (Gen. 19:24) where Jehovah is said to rain fire and brimstone from Jehovah, out of heaven; and in Jeremiah 23:5, 6, where Jehovah promises to raise up a righteous branch to David, whose name should be called "Jehovah our righteousness"; and in Hosea 1:7 where Jehovah resolves he would save his people by Jehovah their God. Other passages might be mentioned, as proving a plurality in Deity; but as some of these will also prove a Trinity in it, they will be considered under the following head; where it will be proved, 2. Secondly, That this plurality in the Godhead, is neither more nor fewer than three; or,

that there is a Trinity of persons in the unity of the divine essence: this I have before taken for granted, and now I shall prove it. And not to take notice of the name Jehovah being used three times, and three times only, in the blessing of the priest, (Num. 6:24-26) and in the prayer of Daniel, (Dan. 9:19) and in the church's declaration of her faith in God, (Isa. 33:22) and the word holy repeated three times, and three times only, in the Seraphims' celebration of the glory of the divine Being, (Isa. 6:3) and in that of the living creatures, in Revelation 4:8 which may seem to be accidental, or the effect of a fervent and devout disposition of mind; but there is not anything, no not the least thing, that is said or written in the sacred scriptures, without design. I shall begin with the famous text in 1 John 5:7 as giving full proof and evidence of this doctrine; "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one": which is not only a proof of the Deity of each of these three, inasmuch as they, are not only said to be "one", that is, one God; and their witness is called the witness of God, (1 John 5:9) but of a Trinity of Persons, in the unity of the divine essence; unity of essence, or nature, is asserted and secured, by their being said to be one; which respects not a mere unity of testimony, but of nature; for it is not said of them, as of the witnesses on earth, that they "agree in one"; but that they "are one". And they may be called a Trinity, inasmuch as they are "three"; and a Trinity of Persons, since they are not only spoken of as distinct from each other, the Father from the Word and Holy Ghost, the Word from the Father and the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Word; but a personal action is ascribed to each of them; for they are all three said to be testifiers, or to bear record; which cannot be said of mere names and characters; nor be understood of one person under different names; for if the one living and true God only bears record, first under the character of a Father, then under the character of a Son, or the Word, and then under the character of the Holy Ghost; testimony, indeed, would be bore three times, but there would be but one testifier, and not three, as the apostle asserts. Suppose one man should, for one man may bear the characters, and stand in the relations of father, son, and master; of a father to a child of his own; of a son, his father being living; and of a master to servants under him; suppose, I say, this man should come into a court of judicature, and be admitted to bear testimony in an affair there depending, and should give his testimony first under the character of a father, then under the character of a son, and next under the character of a master; every one will conclude, that though here was a testimony three times bore, yet there was but one, and not three, that bore record. This text is so glaring a proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, that the enemies of it have done all they can to weaken its authority, and have pushed hard to extirpate it from a place in the sacred writings. They object, that it is wanting in the Syriac version; that the old Latin interpreter has it not; that it is not to be found in many Greek manuscripts; and is not quoted by the ancient fathers who wrote against the Arians, when it might have been of great service to them. To all which it may be replied; that as to the Syriac version, though an ancient one, it is but a version, and till of late appeared a very defective one; the history of the adulterous woman in the eighth of John, the second epistle of Peter, the second and third epistles of John, the epistle of Jude, and the book of Revelation, were all wanting, till restored from a copy of archbishop Usher's, by De Dieu and Dr. Pocock; and who also, from an Eastern copy, has supplied the version with this text, so that now it stands in it. And as to the old Latin interpreter, it is certain that it is to be seen in many Latin manuscripts of an early date, and is in the Vulgate Latin version of the London Polyglot Bible; and the Latin translation which bears the name of Jerom has it; and who, in an epistle to Eustochium, prefixed to his translation of those canonical epistles, complains of the omission of it, by unfaithful interpreters. As to its being wanting in some Greek manuscripts, it need only be said, it is found in many others; it is in the Complutensian edition, the compilers of which made use of various copies; out of sixteen ancient copies of Robert Stephens's, nine of them had it; and it is also said to be in an old British copy. As to its not being quoted by some of the ancient fathers, this can be no proof of its not being genuine; since it might be in the original copy, and not in that used by them, through the carelessness and unfaithfulness of transcribers; or through copies erased falling into their hands, such as

had been corrupted before the times of Arius, even by Artemon, or his disciples, who lived in the second century; who held that Christ was a mere man; by whom it is said, this passage was erased; and certain it is, that this epistle was very early corrupted; as the ancient writers testify: or it might be in the copies used by the fathers, and yet not quoted by them, having scriptures not without it, to prove and defend the doctrine of it; and yet, after all, it appears plainly to be quoted by many of them; by Fulgentius, in the beginning of the sixth century, against the Arians, without any scruple or hesitation: and Jerom, as before observed, has it in his translation, made in the latter end of the fourth century: and it is quoted by Athanasius, about the middle of it; and before him by Cyprian, in the middle of the third century: and is manifestly referred to by Tertullian, in the beginning of it; and by Clemens of Alexandria, towards the end of the second century: so that it is to be traced up within a hundred years, or less, the writing of the epistle; which is enough to satisfy anyone of the genuineness of this text. And, besides, it should be observed, that there never was any dispute about it, until Erasmus left it out in the first edition of his translation of the New Testament; and yet he himself, upon the credit of the old British copy, before mentioned, put it into another edition of his translation. Yea, the Socinians themselves have not dared to leave it out in their German Racovian version, A. C. 1630. To which may be added, that the context requires it; the connection with the preceding verse shows it, as well as its opposition to, and distinction from, the following verse; and in 1 John 5:9 is a plain reference to the divine witnesses in this; for the inference in it would not be clear, if there was no mention before made of a divine testimony. But I shall not rest the proof of the doctrine of the Trinity on this single passage; but on the whole current and universal consent of scripture, where it is written as with a sunbeam; according to which, a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead appears in the works of creation, providence, and grace; in all things respecting the office and work of Christ; in God's acts of grace towards and upon his people; and in their worship and duties of religion enjoined them, and practised by them.

1. In the works of creation: as by these the eternal power and Godhead are made manifest, so in them are plain traces of a Trinity of persons; that God the Father made the heavens, earth and sea, and all that are in them, under which character the apostles addressed him as distinct from Christ his Son, (Acts 4:24, 27) none will doubt; and that the divine Word, or Son of God, was concerned in all this a question cannot be made of it, when it is observed that it is said, "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that is made" (John 1:3). And as for the Holy Spirit he is not only said to move upon the face of the waters which covered the earth, and brought that unformed chaos of earth and water into a beautiful order, but to garnish the heavens, to bespangle the firmament with stars of light, and to form the crooked serpent, the Leviathan, which being the greatest, is put for all the fishes of the sea; as well as he is said to be sent forth yearly, and renews the face of the earth at every returning spring; which is little less than a creation, and is so called, (Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; Ps. 104:30) and all three may be seen together in one text, (Ps. 33:6) "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth"; where mention is made of Jehovah, and his Word, the eternal Logos, and of his Spirit, the breath of his mouth, as all concerned in the making of the heavens, and all the host of them. And as in the creation of man, in particular, a plurality has been observed, this plurality was neither more nor fewer than three; that God the Father is the maker of men, will not be objected to; "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" (Mai. 2:10) and the Son of God, who is the husband of the church, and the Redeemer of men, is expressly said to be their maker, (Isa. 54:5) and of the Holy Spirit, Elihu in so many words says, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4).

2. A Trinity of persons appears in the works of providence. "My father", says Christ, "worketh hitherto and I work", (John 5:17) that is, ever since the works of creation were finished, in which both had an hand, they have been jointly concerned in the works of providence, in the government of the world, and in ordering and disposing of all things in it; and not to the exclusion of the Holy Spirit, for, "Who hath

directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" that is, in the affair of the government of the world, as follows; "With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" to manage the important concerns of the world, to do everything wisely and justly, and to overrule all for the best ends and purposes (see Isa. 40:13,14). And particularly the three divine persons appear in that remarkable affair of providence, the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and the protection and guidance of them through the wilderness to the land of Canaan. Whoever reads attentively (Isa. 63:7-14) will easily observe, that mention is made of Jehovah, and of his mercy, lovingkindness, and goodness to the children of Israel; and then of the Angel of his presence, as distinct from him, showing love and pity to them, in saving, redeeming, bearing, and carrying them all the days of old; and next of his Holy Spirit, whom they rebelled against, and whom they vexed, and yet, though thus provoked, he led them on through the wilderness, and caused them to rest in the land of Canaan. 2c. The three divine persons are to be discerned most clearly in all the works of grace. The inspiration of the scriptures is a wonderful instance of the grace and goodness of God to men, which is the foundation and source of spiritual knowledge, peace, and comfort; it is a divine work: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God", (2 Tim. 3:16) of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and though it is particularly ascribed to the Holy Spirit, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost", (2 Peter 1:21) yet no one surely will say, to the exclusion of the Father; nor is there any reason to shut out the Son from a concern herein; and we find all three dictating the writings David was the penman of: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in tongue; the God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me", (2 Sam. 23:2, 3) where, besides the Spirit of the Lord, who spake by every inspired writer, there is the Father, the God of Israel, as he is commonly styled, and the Son, the Rock of Israel, the Messiah, often figuratively called the Rock; and in the same manner, and by the same persons David was inspired, all the other penmen of the scriptures were. Those writings acquaint us with the covenant of grace, no other writings do, made from everlasting before the world was; this covenant was made by Jehovah the Father, and was made with his Son, who condescended and agreed to be the surety, mediator, and messenger of it; yea he is said to be the covenant itself; and in which the Holy Spirit is promised, and whose part in it is, and to which he agreed, to be the applier of the blessings and promises of it to those interested therein; see (Ps. 89:3; Isa. 42:6; Mai. 3:1; Heb. 7:22, 12:24; Ezek. 36:27; John 16:14, 15) and they are all three mentioned together as concerned in this covenant, in (Hag. 2:4, 5) where, for the encouragement of the people of Israel to work in rebuilding the temple, it is said, "For I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts", according to "the word that I covenanted with you"; or rather, as Junius renders it, "with the Word" by whom I covenanted "with you, when ye came out of Egypt", (at which time the covenant of grace was more clearly and largely revealed;) "so my Spirit remaineth among you": where may be observed, Jehovah the covenant maker, and his Word, in, by, and with whom he covenanted; and the Spirit standing, as it may be rendered, remaining and abiding, to see there was a performance and an application of all that was promised. In the sacred writings, the economy of man's salvation is clearly exhibited to us, in which we find the three divine persons, by agreement and consent, take their distinct parts; and it may be observed that the election of men to salvation is usually ascribed to the Father; redemption, or the impetration of salvation, to the Son; and sanctification, or the application of salvation, to the Spirit; and they are all to be met with in one passage, (1 Peter 1:2) "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus". The same may be observed in (2 Thess. 2:13, 14) where God the Father is said to choose men from the beginning unto salvation; and the sanctification of the Spirit, is the means through which they are chosen; and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, the end to which they are chosen and called: but no where are these acts of grace more distinctly ascribed to each person than in the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, where God the Father of Christ, is said to bless and choose his

people in him before the foundation of the world, and to predestinate them to the adoption of children by him, in whom they are accepted with him, (Eph. 1:3-6) and where Christ is spoken of as the author of redemption through his blood, which includes forgiveness of sin, and a justifying righteousness; which entitles to the heavenly inheritance, (Eph. 1:7, 11) and then the Holy Spirit, in distinction from them both, is said to be the earnest of their inheritance, and by whom they are sealed until they come to the full possession of it (Eph. 1:13,14). The doctrine of the Trinity is often represented as a speculative point, of no great moment whether it is believed or not, too mysterious and curious to be pried into, and that it had better be let alone than meddled with; but, alas! it enters into the whole of our salvation, and all the parts of it; into all the doctrines of the gospel, and into the experience of the saints; there is no doing without it; as soon as ever a man is convinced of his sinful and miserable estate by nature, he perceives there is a divine person that he has offended, and that there is need of another divine person to make satisfaction for his offences, and a third to sanctify him; to begin and carry on a work of grace in him, and to make him meet for eternal glory and happiness. 2d. A Trinity of persons in the Godhead may be plainly discovered in all things relating to the office and work of Christ, as the Redeemer and Saviour. In the mission of him into this world on that account: he, the Son of God, was sent by agreement, with his own consent, by the Father and the Spirit; this is affirmed by himself, (Isa. 48:16) "Now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me"; even he who says, (Isa. 48:12, 13) "I am the first and the last", and whose hand laid the foundation of the earth, and whose right hand spanned the heaven, and who is continued speaking to (Isa. 48:16) and must be a divine person; the mighty God, who is said to be sent by Jehovah the Lord God, and by his Spirit; who therefore must be three distinct persons, and not one only; or otherwise the sense must be, "now I and myself have sent myself", which is none at all. Christ the Son of God, sent to be the Saviour, in the fullness of time was made of a woman, or became incarnate; and though he only took flesh, the three divine persons were concerned in this affair; the Father provided a body for him in his purposes and decrees, council and covenant; the Word or Son was made flesh, and dwelt among men, and that which was conceived in the Virgin, was of the Holy Ghost, (Heb. 10:5; John 1:14; Matthew 1:20) and in the message to the Virgin, and the declaration of this mysterious affair to her by the angel, mention is made distinctly of all the three Persons; there is the "highest", Jehovah the Father; and "the Son of the highest", who took flesh of the Virgin; and the Holy Ghost, or "the power of the highest", to whose overshadowing influence, the mysterious incarnation is ascribed (Luke 1:32,35). Christ, the Son of God, being incarnate, was anointed with the Holy Ghost, his gifts and graces without measure; whereby, as man, he was fitted and qualified for his office as Mediator. The anointer is said to be God, his God, the great Jehovah; the anointed, the Son of God in human nature, called therefore the Christ of God, the true Messiah; what he was anointed with was the Holy Ghost, his gifts and grace, signified by the oil of gladness; see (Ps. 45:7; Isa. 61:1; Acts 10:38) when he was thirty years of age he was baptized of John in Jordan, where all the three divine persons appeared; the Son in human nature, submitting to the ordinance of baptism: the Father, by a voice from heaven, declaring him to be his beloved Son; and the Holy Spirit, descending on him as a dove (Matthew 3:16, 17). This was always reckoned so full and clear a proof of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, that it was a common saying with the ancients, go to Jordan, and there learn the doctrine of the Trinity. Before our Lord's sufferings and death, he gave out various promises to his disciples, that he would send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to them; in which there are plain traces of a Trinity of Persons; as when he says, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter" (John 14:16). Here is God the Father of Christ, who is prayed unto, who is one Person; and here is the Son in human nature, praying, a second Person, the Son of God; and because he was so, his prayer was always prevalent; nor could he be a mere creature, who speaks so positively and authoritatively, he shall give you; and then there is another Comforter prayed for, even the Spirit of truth, distinct from the Father and the Son; the same may be observed in and in (John 15:26, 16:7). Christ by his sufferings and death, obtained eternal redemption for men. The price

that was paid for it, was paid to God the Father so it is said, "hath redeemed us to God by thy blood" (Rev. 5:9). What gave the price a sufficient value was, the dignity of his person, as the Son of God, (1 John 1:7) and it was "through the eternal Spirit" he offered himself to God, (Heb. 9:14) which some understand of the divine nature; but it is not usual to say, Christ did this, or the other thing, through the divine nature, but by the Spirit, as in (Matthew 12:28; Acts 1:2) besides, in some copies of (Heb. 9:14) it is read, "through the Holy Spirit". Again, Christ having suffered and died for men, he rose again for their justification; in which all the three persons were concerned; God the Father raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, (1 Peter 1:21) and he raised himself by his own power, according to his own prediction, (John 2:19) and was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness" or the Holy Spirit, "by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4, see also Rom. 8:11). 2e. This truth of a Trinity in the Godhead, shines in all the acts of grace towards or in men; in the act of justification; it is God the Father that justifies, by imputing the righteousness of his Son, without works, (Rom. 3:30, 4:6, 8:33) and it is not only by the righteousness of Christ that men are justified; but he himself justifies by his knowledge, or by faith in him, (Isa. 53:11) and it is the Spirit of God that pronounces the sentence of justification in the conscience of believers; hence they are "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God", (1 Cor. 6:11) in the act of adoption; the grace of the Father in bestowing such a favour on any of the children of men, is owned, (1 John 3:1) and through the grace of Christ, a way is opened, by redemption wrought out by him, for the reception of this blessing; and he it is that gives power to those that believe in him, to become the sons of God, (Gal. 4:4, 5; John 1:12) and the Holy Spirit witnesses, their adoption to them; hence he is called the Spirit of adoption, (Rom. 8:15, 16) and all three appear in one text, respecting this blessing of grace; "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father", (Gal. 4:6) where the Father is spoken of as distinct from the Son, and the Son from the Father, and the Spirit from them both, and all three bear their part in this wonderful favour. Regeneration is an evidence of adoption; and an instance of the great love and abundant mercy of God; and which is sometimes ascribed to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Peter 1:3) and sometimes to the Son of God, who regenerates and quickens whom he will, (John 5:21; 1 John 2:29) and sometimes to the Spirit of God, (John 3:3, 5) and all three are mentioned together in (Titus 3: 4-6) where God the Father called our Saviour, is said to save by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which grace of his is shed abroad in men through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Once more, their unction, or anointing, which they receive from the Holy One, is from God the Father, in and through Christ, and by the Spirit; "Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts", (2 Cor. 1:21, 22) where God the Father is represented as the establisher and anointer, and Jesus Christ, as a distinct person, in whom the saints are established and anointed; and the Spirit, distinct from them both, as the earnest of their future glory. 2f. It plainly appears that there is a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, from the worship and duties of religion enjoined good men, and performed by them. The ordinance of baptism, a very solemn part of divine worship, is ordered to be administered, and is administered, when done rightly, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost", (Matthew 28:19) which are to be understood, not of three names and characters, but of three persons distinctly named and described, and who are but one God, as the singular word "name", prefixed to them, signifies; men are to be baptised in one name of three persons; but not into one of three names, as an ancient writer has observed; nor into three incarnates; but into three of equal honour and glory. God alone is to be invoked in prayer, and petitions are directed sometimes to one Person, and sometimes to another; sometimes to the first Person, the God and Father of Christ, (Eph. 3:14) sometimes to Christ himself, the second Person, as by Stephen, (Acts 7:59) and sometimes to the Lord the Spirit, the third Person, (2 Thess. 3:5) and sometimes to all three together, (Rev. 1:4, 5) and whereas the saints, who are made light in the Lord, need an increase of light, prayer is made for

them, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that is, of Christ, (Eph. 1:17, 18) where the Father of Christ is prayed to; the Spirit of wisdom is prayed for; and that for an increase in the knowledge of Christ, distinct from them both: and whereas the saints need an increase of strength, as well as light, prayer is made for them, that the Father of Christ would strengthen them by his Spirit in the inward man, (Eph. 3:14- 16; Zech. 10:12) and in a formentioned text, prayer is made to the divine Spirit, to direct the hearts of good men into the love of God, and patient waiting for Christ, (2 Thess. 3:5) where again the three divine Persons are plainly distinguished; and who may easily be discerned as distinct Persons, in the benedictory prayer of the apostle, (2 Cor. 13:14) with which I shall conclude the proof from scripture, of a Trinity of Persons in the unity of the divine essence; "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all". Amen. To which may be added; that a plurality of Persons in the Godhead, seems necessary from the nature of God himself, and his most complete happiness; for as he is the best, the greatest and most perfect of Beings, his happiness in himself must be the most perfect and complete; now happiness lies not in solitude, but in society; hence the three personal distinctions in Deity, seem necessary to perfect happiness, which lies in that most glorious, inconceivable, and inexpressible communion the three Persons have with one another; and which arises from the, incomprehensible in being and unspeakable nearness they have to each other (John 10:38 14:10, 11).

Chapter 28

OF THE PERSONAL RELATIONS; OR, RELATIVE PROPERTIES WHICH DISTINGUISH THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS IN THE DEITY.

Since there are Three who are the one God; and these Three are not one and the same Person, but three different Persons, there must be something which distinguishes them from each other; and the distinction between them is not merely "nominal", which is no distinction at all; as when the Sabellians say, God is one Person, having three names, Father, Son, and Spirit; here is no distinction; just as when a man has three names, they no more distinguish him than one would; be he called William, Henry, Frederic, William would not distinguish him from Henry, nor Henry from William, nor Frederic from them both, he being one man, having these several names: nor is the distinction merely "modal"; rather real modal; for though there are three modes of subsisting in the Deity, and each Person has a distinct mode, yet the phrase seems not strong enough; for the distinction is real and personal; the Three in the Godhead are not barely three modes, but three distinct Persons in a different mode of subsisting, who are really distinct from each other; so that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, nor the Holy Spirit either the Father or the Son; but the difficulty is, what that is which gives or makes the distinction between them? Now let it be observed,

1. Be it what it may, which distinguishes the divine Persons, it must be as early as the existence of God itself: God is from everlasting to everlasting; what God is now he ever was; he is the eternal and immutable "I AM"; he is what he was, and will be what he is; he is he "which is, and was, and is to come"; he is eternally and invariably the same: if the one God existed from eternity; and if the three Persons are the one God, they must exist from eternity, and exist as distinct Persons; and consequently what gives them their distinction must exist as early. Wherefore,

2. Whatever distinguishes them cannot arise from, nor depend upon any works done by them in time, since their distinction is from eternity; and besides, the works of God "ad extra", or his external works, are common to all the three Persons; for though one may be more commonly ascribed to one Person, and another to another, yet the three Persons have a concern in each; and therefore they cannot distinguish them one from another. Creation is commonly ascribed to the Father of Christ, who is said to make the worlds, and create all things by him his Son; not as a mere instrument of action, since he is a co-efficient Cause of them; "without him is not anything made that is made"; and the Holy Spirit has a concern in the same; as has been observed (see Ps. 33:6). The salvation of men is commonly attributed to the Son, and he is called Jesus Christ our Saviour; and yet, in the same

place, God the Father is called God our Saviour, and is said to save "by the renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:4-6). Regeneration is more commonly said to be the work of the Spirit; and yet men are said to be born of God, of the Father, and of Jesus Christ, as well as of him; and God the Father is expressly said, to beget men again, according to his mercy (1 Peter 1:3). I have made use of the works of God, both to prove the Being of God, and to illustrate and confirm the doctrine of a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead; but these do not make God to be, but to appear to be what he is; had they never been wrought, he would have been just the same as he is in his Being, Perfections, and Persons; for,

3. His works are arbitrary, depending upon his pleasure: thus of the works of creation it is said, "For thy pleasure, or by thy will, they are and were created", (Rev. 4:11) and as all things in providence, so all things in grace, are done according to the counsel of his will; it is of his will he has mercy on men, is gracious to them, regenerates and saves them; wherefore these are things that might or might not be, just as he thought fit; but not so his Being, the Persons in the Deity, and their manner of subsisting in it; for if there had never been a creature made, nor a soul saved, nor a sinner sanctified, God would have been the same he is, three Persons in one God. In the economy of man's salvation, to which some ascribe the distinction of Persons, as taking its rise from thence; the three divine Persons are manifested, but not made, nor made distinct; but were so before, and would have been so, if that had never taken place, as it might not have done, since it flows from the goodwill and pleasure of God; whereas,

4. What gives the distinction, be it what it may, is by necessity of nature; God exists necessarily, and not by choice and will, as has been before argued; for if his existence is owing to will and choice, it must be either the will and choice of another, or his own; not another's, for then that other would be prior and superior to him, and so be God, and not he; not his own will, for then he must be before he was; have will and choice before he existed, which is an absurdity not to be endured: if the one God then necessarily existed, and the three Persons are the one God, they must necessarily exist; and if they exist as three distinct Persons, that which gives them the distinction, must be necessary also, or arise from the necessity of nature; as God is, and the manner in which he is, so the distinction in him is by necessity. But, 5. When I say it is by necessity of nature, I do not mean, that the divine nature, in which the divine persons subsist, distinguishes them; for that nature is one, and common to them all; the nature of the Son is the same with that of the Father; and the nature of the Spirit the same with that of the Father and the Son; and this nature, which they in common partake of, is undivided; it is not parted between them, so that one has one part, and another a second, and another a third; nor that one has a greater, and another a lessor part, which might distinguish them; but the whole fulness of the Godhead is in each. 6. To come to the point; it is the personal relations, or distinctive relative properties, which belong to each Person, which distinguish them one from another; as paternity in the first Person, filiation in the second, and spiration in the third; or, more plainly, it is "begetting", (Ps. 2:7) which peculiarly belongs to the first, and is never ascribed to the second and third; which distinguishes him from them both; and gives him, with great propriety, the name of Father; and it is being "begotten", that is the personal relation, or relative property of the second Person; hence called, "the only begotten of the Father", (John 1:14) which distinguishes him from the first and third, and gives him the name of the Son; and the relative property, or personal relation of the third Person is, that he is breathed by the first and second Persons; hence called, the breath of the Almighty, the breath of the mouth of Jehovah the Father, and the breath of the mouth of Christ the Lord, and which is never said of the other two persons; and so distinguishes him from them, and very pertinently gives him the name of the Spirit, or breath (Job 33:4; Ps. 33:6; 2 Thess. 2:8). Those men I have now respect to, hold that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead, or divine nature; and therefore it must be something in the divine nature, and not anything out of it, that distinguishes them; not any works "ad extra", done by them; nor their concern in the economy of man's salvation; nor offices bore by them, which are arbitrary things, which might, or might not, have been, had it pleased God; and what that is in the divine nature that can distinguish them, besides what has been mentioned, let it be named if it

can. If one of these distinct Persons is a Father, in the divine nature, and another a Son in the divine nature, there must be something in the divine nature which is the ground of the relation, and distinguishes the one from the other; and can be nothing else than generation, and which distinguishes the third Person from them both, as neither begetting nor begotten. From generation arises the relation, and from relation distinct personality. And as an ancient writer says, "unbegotten, begotten, and proceeding", are not names of essence, (and it may be added, nor of office) but are modes of subsistence; and so distinguish persons. Upon the whole, it is easy to observe, that the distinction of Persons in the Deity, depends on the generation of the Son; take away that, which would destroy the relation between the first and second Persons, and the distinction drops; and that this distinction is natural and necessary, or by necessity of nature, and not arbitrary, or of choice and will; which, if it was, it might not have been at all, or have been otherwise than it is: those who place it to the economy of the Persons in the redemption of men, have been urged with this, that if it was so, he that is called the Father, might have been called the Son; and he that is called the Son, might have been called the Father; which has so pressed them, that they have been obliged to own, that so it might have been, if it had so seemed to God, and been agreeable to his will. Moreover, those who are in this way of thinking, and explain away the generation of the Son, and make it no other than a communion of nature, and a co-existence with the first Person, though they profess there are three Persons in the Godhead, they are not able to prove it, nor to point out that which distinguishes one from another; and besides, are not able to call them by any name, only say, the one is the first Person, the other the second, and the other the third; and even the reason of this order they cannot account for; for if they have their names and distinction from the economy of man's salvation, and the part they take therein, these cannot be given them antecedent to the said economy; and yet they must exist, and be considered as existing previous to it: if the first Person has the name of a Father, from his constituting and appointing Christ to be the Mediator and Saviour; and the second Person the name of a Son, from his constitution as such; though the reason of such names from hence does not appear; and the third Person has the name of Spirit, from any office or work undertook by him, to breathe into men in creation or regeneration; these names cannot be given them antecedent to such economy, constitution, and agreement, taking place; and yet they must be considered antecedent thereunto, in some view or another. To such straits are men reduced, when they leave the form of sound words, which to do is dangerous, and generally leads into one error or another. But all this will more manifestly appear, by considering each divine person particularly, his relative property, and name pertinent to it. I shall begin with, 6a. First, The first Person; whose distinctive relative property is "begetting", and who is very pertinently called, the Father, which distinguishes him from the second and third Persons: and here let it be observed, that it is not his being a Father with respect to the creatures, that distinguishes him; not a Father in creation, providence, and grace: not in creation; he is a Father as the Creator of all; all his creatures are his offspring; and he is particularly the Father of spirits, of angels, and the souls of men; but this does not give him the name of Father in the Trinity; so he would have been, if not one man had ever been made, or an angel formed; nor does his being a Father to creatures distinguish him from the second and third Persons, for they are equally concerned with him in creation; and being the one God that has made us, they are the one Father of us, even the second and third Persons, as well as the first: nor in providence; God is the Father that provides for all his creatures, supplies them with things necessary, and supports them in their Beings; but this is not peculiar to the first Person; in this the second Person jointly and equally operates with him, by whom all things consist, and by whose power all are upheld; and so the third Person; and therefore on this account equally entitled to the character of Father: nor in grace, in adoption, and regeneration; in which all the three Persons have a concern: in adoption, as the Father bestows the wonderful grace on the sons of men, the son gives to them that believe in him power to become the sons of God; and the Spirit has so much to do with it, that he is called the Spirit of adoption: in

regeneration, the Father of Christ begets men again to a lively hope of an inheritance; the Son quickens and regenerates whom he will; and those that are born again, are born of the Spirit: it is not therefore what the first Person does in either of these respects, that entitles him to the character of Father in the Godhead, and distinguishes him from the others; but it is his being the Father of the second Person, or the Father of Christ, as he is often called, and very emphatically and significantly, God the Father, (Gal 1:1; Eph 1:3, 3:14) and this name he has from begetting the Son, who is therefore called his Son, his begotten, his only begotten Son, (Ps. 2:7; John 1:14, 18) and this personal relation, or relative property, is what distinguishes the first Person in the Trinity, it being never attributed to any other. 6b. Secondly, The second Person, whose distinctive relative property and character is, that he is "begotten", which is never said of the other two Persons, and so distinguishes him from them, and gives him the name of "Son"; and that he is the Son of God, there is abundant proof; all the three Persons bear testimony of it; the Father at the baptism and transfiguration of Christ, (Matthew 3:17, 17:5; Ps. 2:7, 89:27) the Word, or Son of God himself, (John 19:7, 5:17, 18, 10:30; Mark 14:61, 62; John 8:13-18) and the Spirit, (Matthew 3:16, 17) it is testified and acknowledged by angels, the good angels, (Luke 1:31, 35; Heb. 1:6) evil angels, the devils, (Matthew 8:29; Mark 3:11; Luke 4:41) by men of all sorts; by good men, (John 1:6, 7, 33, 34, 49; Matthew 16:15; 16 John 6:67, 11:27; Acts 8:37) by bad men (Matthew 27:54). So that he is on all hands acknowledged and owned to be the Son of God. The Sonship of Christ is an article of the greatest importance in the Christian religion; it has a very great concern in, and connection with the ordinance of Christian baptism; it was declared by a voice from heaven, at the baptism of our Lord, "saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). That ordinance is ordered by our Lord himself to be administered "in the name of the Lather, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost", (Matthew 28:19) considered as in their natural relative characters to each other, equally divine persons, and not as sustaining any office, which no one name or term used is expressive of; and it is mentioned in the first confession of faith, and as the sum of it, in order to an admission to that ordinance the scripture gives an account of; "I believe", says the eunuch desiring baptism of Philip; who required an express declaration of his faith; "I believe", says he, "that Jesus Christ is the Son of God", (Acts 8:37) and this was the sum and substance of the ministry of the apostle Paul, with which he first set out, and continued in, that Christ is the Son of God, (Acts 9:20; 2 Cor. 1:19) and, indeed, it is the distinguishing criterion of the Christian religion, and what gives it the preference to all others, and upon which all the important doctrines of it depend; even upon the Sonship of Christ as a divine person; and as by generation, even eternal generation. Without this the doctrine of the Trinity can never be supported; of this the adversaries of it are so sensible, as the Socinians, that they have always set themselves against it with all their might and main; well knowing, that if they can demolish this, it is all over with the doctrine of the Trinity; for without this, the distinction of Persons in the Trinity can never be maintained; and, indeed, without this, there is none at all; take away this, and all distinction ceases. A writer of the present age, and who was the first among us who objected to the eternal generation of the Son of God, though Roell, a Dutchman, before him, attempted to explain it away; or, at least, to a different sense; deed, pretends to hold the doctrine of three distinct Persons in the Deity, and yet explodes this: a strange paradox! He owns some divines have strenuously maintained, and "judiciously defended", the doctrine of the Trinity, who held the eternal generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost. Why then should this judicious defence be deserted by us? he owns that these properties, begetting, begotten, and proceeding, "plainly prove" the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be distinct Persons; why then should they be laid aside? and especially, since without them there is no proof to be made of their being distinct Persons "in the divine nature". He says, that his account of Christ's Sonship, that is, by office, and not by nature, does not take away any argument by which we prove his Deity. But without his eternal generation no proof can be made of his being a distinct divine Person "in the Godhead", and so not of his Deity: he farther says, that it does not take away any argument to prove his distinct personality from the Father and the Holy Ghost;

whereas it takes away that which is the only proof of it, without substituting a sufficient one in its room; and, indeed, no other in the divine nature can be substituted in its room; not the office of Christ, as Mediator; for he must first be proved to be a distinct divine Person, before he can be considered as Mediator. The doctrines of redemption, justification, atonement, and pardon of sin, depend upon the divinity of the Person of Christ, as the Son of God, (Gal. 4:4; Rom. 8:3, 4; Heb. 1:2, 3; 1 John 1:7). I cannot see there is any reason to object to the use of the phrase "eternal generation", as applied to the sonship of Christ, since one divine person is said to "beget", (Ps. 2:7) and therefore must be a Father; and another divine person is said to be "begotten", (John 1:14, 18) and elsewhere, and therefore must be a Son; and if a begotten Son, as he is often said to be, then he must be a Son by generation: for he must be a very illiterate man indeed who does not know that to "beget" and "generate" are the same; and that also to be "begotten" and "generated" are the same; and therefore generation, with great propriety, may be used of the divine persons; and if used of the divine persons as in the divine nature, as if of the Father in the divine nature, then of the Son in the divine nature; and there being nothing in the divine nature but what is eternal, then this generation must be "eternal generation"; there are no persons in the divine nature but who are eternal, the eternal Father, the eternal Son, and the eternal Spirit; nor is there anything in it but what is eternal; every attribute in it is eternal, as eternal power, eternal wisdom, &c. every will, decree, and purpose in it is eternal, the eternal birth of the eternal minds; why not then the Son of God, the Word and Wisdom of God? and indeed Wisdom, or Christ, is expressly said to be "brought forth", Tlbbin, a word expressive of generation, twice used in Proverbs 8:24, 25, and there, in some ancient versions, rendered "begotten", as pEK "brought up", (Prov. 8:30) is in some later versions rendered carried in the bosom, as a son in the bosom of the Father; all which is spoken of as done in eternity: now if Christ was begotten from everlasting, or ever the earth was, before there were any fountains of water, or mountains and hills, and was as early as a son in the bosom of his Father, one would think there can be no difficulty in admitting his eternal generation. To which may be added, that if no moment or instant can be given or pointed at, neither in eternity nor in time, in which Christ was not the begotten Son of the Father, then he must be eternally begotten of him, or be his Son by eternal generation; but no moment and instant can be given or pointed at, neither in eternity nor in time, in which Christ was not the begotten Son of the Father; therefore he must be eternally begotten of him; or, in other words, be the Son of the Father by eternal generation. The phrase "eternal generation" is said to be a contradiction in terms; surely, not more so, than "eternal creation", and an "eternal creature": it may be thought so by those who will say the same of a Trinity in Unity, or of three being one, though expressly asserted in 1 John 5:7 and so is no more a contradiction than a Trinity of persons in one God. Indeed if the phrase was used of human generation, and applied to that, it might well be thought to be a contradiction in terms; but not as used of divine generation, and as applied to that; the one being in a nature finite, the other infinite. Perhaps the distinction of a priority of order, and a priority of time, may serve to remove the seeming contradiction; the former may be in things eternal, but not the latter. Thus, for instance, God is eternal, and so are his decrees; as the decree of election, or rather God's act of choosing men before the foundation of the world; now God may be conceived of as previous to his act of choosing in priority of order, though not in priority of time, which cannot be admitted in eternity. So the Father generating the Son, may be considered in priority of order previous to the Son generated by him, though not in priority of time, of which there can be none in eternity; considering therefore the Son's generation of the Father from eternity, in a priority of order, though there can be none of time, it will not appear to be a contradiction in terms. When the scriptures ascribe generation to the Divine Being, it must be understood in a manner suitable to it, and not of carnal and corporal generation; no man in his senses can ever think that God generates as man does; nor believe that ever any man held such a notion of generation in God; yet Socinus has the impudence to say, that some called Evangelics, hold that God generates in the divine essence one like himself, "more animantium", as animals do. But generation must be understood of such generation as

agrees with the nature of a spirit, and of an infinite uncreated spirit, as God is; that spirits generate we know from the souls or spirits we have about us and in us; our minds, which are spirits, generate thought; thought is the "conception" and "birth" of the mind; and so we speak of it in common and ordinary speech, "I conceive", or such a man "conceives" so and so; this is my "conception" of things, such are the "conceptions" of others, &c. So with the Platonic philosophers, thought is the birth of the mind; they call it the mind begotten by the mind, as it were another like itself; now as soon as the mind is, thought is, they commence together and they co-exist, and always will; and this the mind begets within itself; without any mutation or alteration in itself. Now in some respect these answer: the mind to God who is vouc;, the eternal mind, and thought, the birth of the mind, to Christ, the eternal Xoyoc;, word and wisdom of God; who is in some sort represented by Xoyoc; ev8ia0STO<;, the internal mental word. So Plato says, "thought is Xoyoq, word or speech, by which the soul declares and explains to itself what it considers"; or elsewhere, "thought is a discourse within the soul to itself, without a voice". Aristotle somewhere calls it the Xoyoc;, or word, tco voi oovaiSiov, co-eternal with the mind. Now if our finite created spirits, or minds, are capable of generating thought, the internal word or speech, and that without any motion, change, or alteration, without any diminution and corruption, without division of their nature or multiplication of their essence; then in an infinitely more perfect manner can God, an infinite uncreated spirit, beget his Son, the eternal Word, wisdom, reason, and understanding, in his eternal mind, which he never was without, nor was he before it: "In the beginning was the word", &c. (John 1:1) and this same Word is expressly said to be "the only begotten of the Father", (John 1:14) and this perfectly agreeable to the sense and language of the old Jewish church, as appears from the ancient paraphrases, and from Philo, who says of the Xoyoc;, or Word, that it is not unbegotten as God, nor begotten as men, and that it is the first begotten Son, with other expressions of like nature: these things considered, may serve in some measure to relieve our minds, and make it more easy to us to conceive of this wonderful and mysterious affair. "Mental or metaphysical generation, as a learned divine observes, is a similitude and adumbration of divine generation; as the mind begets by nature, not by power, so likewise God; as the mind begets a birth co-essential and co-eternal, so God; as the mind simple and perfect begets a birth simple and perfect, so God; as the mind begets immutably (or without mutation) so God; as the mind begets of itself in itself, so God; as the mind does not beget out of matter without itself, so neither God: as the mind always begets and cannot but beget, so God the Father; as metaphysical generation abides, so the divine." Not but that there is in some respects a great dissimilitude between these, as the same writer observes; for the mind begets only a faculty, or an inexistent propriety, but God the Father begets a person existing by himself; the mind begins to beget in time, but God begins not to beget, but always begets from eternity, &c. To this may be added another similitude, which may help us in this matter, and serve to illustrate it; and that is the sun, to which God is sometimes compared; the sun generates its own ray of light, without any change, corruption, division, and diminution; it never was without its ray of light, as it must have been had it been prior to it; they commenced together and co-exist, and will as long as the sun endures; and to this there seems to be an allusion, when Christ is called the "brightness", arcaiiyaopa, the effulgence, the beaming forth "of his Father's glory", (Heb. 1:3) "ut radius ex sole", as the ray from the sun, as Tertullian expresses it. Though such allusions are not to be stretched too far, nor admitted where they imply any imperfection. It will be granted that the phrases "begetting" and "begotten", as attributed to the divine persons in the Godhead, are used in reference to human generation; between which and divine generation there is some resemblance; as likeness, sameness of nature, personality, &c. and as we consider divine generation, it comes nearer to generation, properly so called, than any scheme or hypothesis opposed to it; but then care must be taken to remove from our minds everything carnal and impure; and what implies an imperfection; as division of nature, multiplication of essence, priority and posteriority, motion, mutation, alteration, corruption, diminution, cessation from operation, &c. to reason from the one to the other, as running parallel to each

other, is unreasonable; to argue from human to divine generation; from that which is physical or natural, to that which is hyperphysical or supernatural; from what is in finite nature, to that which is in a nature infinite, unbounded, and eternal, is very irrational; and to reason from the one to the other, without limitation, restriction, care, and caution, is very unsafe and dangerous; since it may lead unawares into foolish and hurtful errors; and when objections of this sort are made, as they too often are, in a vain, ludicrous, and wanton manner, they are to be rejected and detested, as impious and blasphemous; and they that make them are not to be disputed with, but despised: what is objected in a modest and decent way may be attended to; and the chief that I have met with are, that the sonship of Christ by generation makes him to be later than the Father, to be dependent on him, and subordinate to him; or, in other words, that it seems to be contrary to his eternity, independence, and equality. Let us a little consider each of these objections. 6b 1. It is urged, that he that generates must be before him that is generated; a father that begets must be before the son that is begotten by him; and putting the sonship of Christ on this foot, he cannot be co-eternal with the Father, but must have a beginning. This is the old stale objection of the Arians, and of Arias himself, who stumbled at this, and set out with it, reasoning thus: "If the Father begat the Son, he that is begotten must have a beginning of his existence; and from hence it must be evident that there was a time when he was not a Son; and therefore it must necessarily follow, that he has his subsistence out of nothing". And so Aetius, a follower of his, could not understand how that which is begotten, could be co-eternal with him that begets. But a little attention to a plain rule will set this matter in a clear light, and remove this objection: the rule is, and I think it is a good one, and will hold good, that "correlates mutually put or suppose each other"; that is, they commence together, they exist together, they co-exist, and that one is not before the other, nor the one after the other. Now father and son are correlates, they suppose each other; a father supposes a son, and a son supposes a father; they commence and exist together, they co-exist, they are not one before nor after another: the father, as a father, is not before his son, as such; nor the son, as a son, is not later than his father, as such; let a man have a firstborn son, as soon as he has one he becomes a father, and not before; and his son is as early a son as he is a father; and supposing they live together a term of years, be it an hundred years if you please, which is not an unreasonable supposition, since it has been a fact that father and son have lived together a longer term of time; now at the end of these hundred years, the father, as a father, will not be a moment older than the son as such; nor the son, as a son, one moment younger than the father, as such; their relations rise and continue together till one or other of them cease. There is no priority nor posteriority, no before nor "after" in these relations; and so, as an ancient writer says, "with God there is no post existence of him that is begotten, nor pre-existence of him that begets;" if there is an eternal Father, there must be an eternal Son, and therefore must be co-eternal; there cannot be a Father without a Son, that would be an absurdity, and therefore not before him. Should it be said, that though these mutual relations exist together, and that one is not before the other; yet surely he that is a father, though not as a father, must exist before him who is his son. As plausible as this may seem to be, it may not appear so plain when examined; for this objection may arise from a false notion of animal generation. Generation is not a production of a non-entity into being, or a bringing into existence what did not exist before; for to bring that into being which was not in being before, is nothing less than a creation, and creation is too much to ascribe to the fathers of our flesh; they are not our creators, they do not give us our being; they do not bring us out of a state of non-existence into a state of existence; God only is the creator. According to the later discoveries in natural philosophy respecting generation, it appears that every man is born of an animalcule; that generation, so called, is no other than a motion of the animalcule into a more convenient place for nourishment and growth. All generation, say our modern philosophers, is with us nothing, so far as we can find, but "nutrition", or "augmentation" of parts: they conclude, that the "animalcule" of every tribe of creatures, were originally formed by the almighty Parent, to be the seed of all future generations of animals; and that it seems most probable, that the "semina", or "stamina", as of all

plants, so of animals that have been or ever shall be in the world, have been formed "ab origine mundi", by the almighty Creator, within the first of each respective kind; and that these are no other than the entire bodies themselves "in parvo"; and contain everyone of the same parts and members, with the complete bodies themselves, when grown to maturity; all which, they say, evidently appears, by the help of microscopes: and this is the rather to be attended to, because it so greatly agrees with the sacred scriptures, by which it appears, not only that Levi, the great grandson of Abraham, was in his loins, that is, seminally in him, before his father Jacob was born; but that all mankind were in Adam, that is seminally in him, as well as representatively; the former being the foundation of the latter (Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22). If, therefore, the "semina" of all mankind were created together in the first man; and all men were seminally, and in "animalculo" together in Adam, then not one before another, no priority nor posteriority among them: so that these things, rightly considered, instead of weakening, serve to strengthen and illustrate the doctrine pleaded for. How far this philosophy is defensible, I will not say; I only observe it to abate the force of the objection; and the confidence of those who make it, it being not easy to disprove the said hypothesis. 6b2. As to the objection taken from dependence, suggesting that the doctrine of Christ's Sonship by generation is contrary to the independence of Christ as a divine Person. It may be asked, what dependence has a Son upon a Father, in animal generation? Does he depend upon him as the cause of his existence? He does not. He does not bring him into being. God only is the efficient Cause and Author of his Being. He is, at most, only an instrument of removing the animalcule, created of God, into a more convenient situation for nourishment and growth; in order, at a proper time, to come forth into the world, according to the above hypothesis: a parent has no concern in the formation of his child; it is formed without his knowledge, and without asking his consent and will; he knows nothing of its shape, features, and sex, until its birth; and when it is born, its life, and the continuance of its being, do not depend upon him; a son lives when a Father dies, and often many years after him: it is true, in some sense, he may be said to depend upon him with respect to some circumstances, especially in the former part of life; as, for the care of him, provision for him, assistance and protection given him; circumstances which argue weakness in the human natnre; but not to be found in the divine nature, nor anything analogous to them; and does not a father often times depend upon his son, as in case of distress, sickness, penury, and old age? But be these things as they may, Christ, as all sound divines hold, is amoGsoc;, "God of himself", and independent of any other, though he is the Son of the Father; and as the distinct personality of the Son of God arises from his relation to his Father as such, so the distinct personality of the Father arises from his relation to his Son as such; hence the distinct personality of the one, is no more dependent, than the distinct personality of the other; and both arise from their mutual relation to each other; and both arise and commence together, and not one before the other; and both are founded in eternal generation. 6b3. As to subordination and subjection, and inequality, which it is supposed the Sonship of Christ by generation implies; it may be answered, that Christ in his office-capacity, in which he, as Mediator, is a Servant, and as he is man, and appeared in the form of one; it will be acknowledged, that he is subordinate and subject to the Father; but not as he is the Son of God: and whatever inequality sonship may imply among men, it implies no such thing in the divine nature, among the divine persons; who in it subsist in perfect equality with one another; and in particular, the Scriptures represent the Son of God as equal to his Father, as one who thought it no robbery to be equal with God; being of the same nature, and having the same perfections with him, and that he is equal to him with respect to power and authority; for with respect to power he says, "I and my Father are one"; and they represent him as having the same claim to equal honour, homage, and worship; since all men are "to honour the Son, as they honour the Father"; not as in subordination to him, but as equal with him. There is a passage which is perverted by some to the sense of subordination and subjection of the Son of God to the Father, which is in 1 Corinthians 15:24, 28. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father and when all things shall be subdued unto

him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him; and put all things under him; that God may be all in all". It should be observed, that all this is said of something that is future; and which, as yet, is not, and so no proof of what is, or has been. Besides, there is a twofold Sonship of Christ, divine and human; from the one he is denominated the Son of God, and from the other the Son of man. Now Christ in the text, is only called "the Son", which does not determine which Sonship is meant. This is to be learnt from the context, where he is spoken of throughout as man, as man who died, and rose again from the dead; from whence, by various arguments, is proved the general resurrection; and so he is continued to be spoken of to the passage under consideration; the plain and easy sense of which is, that at the end of the world, at Christ's second coming, when all the elect of God shall be gathered in, and Christ shall have completely finished his work, as Mediator, he will deliver up the mediatorial kingdom complete and perfect, that is, the whole body of the elect, the kingdom of priests, to the Father, and say, "Lo, I, and the children whom thou hast given me"; and then the delegated power under which he acted, as the Son of man, will cease, and be no more; and that sort of rule, authority, and power, will be put down; and he, as the Son of man, be no longer vested with such authority, but shall become subject to him that put all things under him; and then God, Father, Son, and Spirit, will be all in all; and there will be no more distinction of offices among them; only the natural and essential distinctions of the divine Persons will always continue. There are various passages of scriptures in which Christ, as the Son of God, addresses his divine Father, without the least appearance of any subordination or subjection to him, but as his equal, as Jehovah's fellow, particularly John 17:24. But I shall proceed to examine more particularly, in what sense Christ is the Son of God, or what is the true cause and reason of this relation. The Socinians, unwilling to own the eternal Sonship of Christ, or that he was the Son of God before he was the Son of Mary; and not caring to acknowledge the true cause and reason of it, which is but one, have devised many; which shows the puzzle and confusion they are in; Calovius has collected out of their writings, no less than thirteen causes, or reasons of Christ's Sonship; some of them are so weak and trifling, as not deserving to be mentioned; and others require but little to be said to them: I shall take notice of some of the principal ones: and then proceed to place the Sonship of Christ on its true basis, and assign the proper sole cause and reason of it; his being "begotten" of the Father. 6b3a. They say he is called the Son of God because of the great love of God to him, and make beloved and begotten to be synonymous terms; that Christ is the object of the love of God, the Son of his love, his dearly beloved Son, is most certain; but then it is not his love to him that is the foundation and cause of relation to him; he is not his Son because he loves him; but he loves him because he is his Son; it is not love among men that produces such a relation; there may be great love where there is no such relation; Jonathan loved David as his own soul; but this strong love bore to him, did not make him nor denominate him his son. On the other hand, there may be relation and not love; a father may not love his own son; neither love nor hatred effect relation; the one does not make it, nor the other destroy it. 6b3b. Sometimes they ascribe the Sonship of Christ to his likeness to God, and make that to be the cause of it: that Christ is the image of the invisible God, the express image of his Father's Person, and so like him, that he that has seen the one, has seen the other, because the same nature and perfections are in both, is true; yet the reason why Christ is called the Son of God, is not because he is like him, but he is like him because he is his Son; of the same nature and essence with him. 6b3c. At other times they tell us, he is the Son of God by adoption; of which the Scriptures give not the least hint. To which may be objected, that Christ is God's own Son, his proper Son, the Son of himself; and therefore not adopted: whoever adopts an own son? or what reason can there be for it? adoption among men, is not of their own sons: but usually when they have none of their own; as the instances of the adoption of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter, and of Esther by Mordecai show: besides, Christ is the begotten Son of God; and if begotten, then not adopted; these are inconsistent; yea, he is his only begotten Son; whereas, if he was his Son by adoption, he could not be said to be his only Son, since he has many adopted ones; even as many as are predestinated to the adoption of children, by Christ;

as many as the Father gave unto him; as many as he has redeemed, "that they might receive the adoption of children"; as many as receive him, that is, believe in him, "to whom he gives power to become the sons of God"; even as many sons as he brings to glory; which is a number no man can number: but the more principal causes of Christ's Sonship they insist upon, and which seem to have the most countenance from scripture, are as follow, and which I shall more particularly and largely consider. 6a3d. The miraculous conception and birth of Christ, or his wonderful incarnation, is assigned as the reason of his Sonship; and this is founded on (Luke 1:35) the words of the angel to Mary, in answer to the difficulties objected by her, to Christ being born of her; "The holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also, that holy Thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God". Now let it be observed, that the angel does not say the holy Thing born of the virgin should "be", but should be "called" the Son of God; for though sometimes the sense of such a phrase is the same as to "be", as in Isaiah 9:6; 1 John 3:1, yet seems not intended here; since this appellation, the Son of God, is a name which Christ has been, and is usually called by; and the angel is not giving a reason of Christ's being the Son of God; for he was so before his incarnation; but of the manifestation and declaration of him as such in the human nature; nor does the angel predict that Christ should be called the Son of God, for "this reason", because of his miraculous birth; for either he was to call himself so, or others were to call him so, for this reason, which neither have been; or else the angel's prediction must be false, which cannot be admitted. Moreover, the particle therefore, is not causal, but consequential; the angel is not giving a reason why Christ should be called the Son of God, but why he should be received and owned as such by his people; who would infer and conclude from his wondrous birth of a virgin, that he must be the Immanuel, the child to be born, the Son given, &c. prophesied of in Isaiah 7:14, 9:6 where he is called the "child born", with respect to his human nature, and the "Son given", with respect to his divine nature (see John 3:16 4:10). Once more, the particle "also", ought not to be neglected; "Therefore, also, that holy Thing", &c. not only the divine person of Christ should be owned and called the Son of God; but also the human nature of Christ, thus wonderfully produced, being taken up into personal union with him, should bear the same name: so that it is not the wonderful birth of the human nature, that so much as gives the name; but the union of this nature to the person of the Son of God; whence it is called by the same name he is. The reasons why Christ cannot be the Son of God, on account of his wonderful incarnation, are the following. 6b3dl. If so, then the Holy Spirit must be the Father of Christ, since he had such a special and peculiar concern in it; as the above passage shows; and then there must be two Fathers in the Trinity; which would introduce a wretched confusion there. But there is but one, distinct from the Word and Spirit (1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19). Besides, the Father of Christ is, in many places, distinguished from the Spirit, and therefore cannot be the same (John 14:16, 17, 26, 15:26; Eph 1:17, 3:14, 16). To which may be added, that the Spirit is called the Spirit of the Son, (Gal. 4:6) whereas, if this was the case, rather the Son should be called the Son of the Spirit; which he never is. 6b3d2. If the incarnation of Christ is the cause of his divine Sonship, then there was no God the Father of Christ under the Old Testament; this was what the Marcionites of old asserted; which put the ancient writers on proving, as they did, that it was the Father of Christ who made the world, gave the law, spoke by the prophets, and edited the books of the Old Testament; all which appears from Hebrews 1:1, 2. Besides, God existed as the Father of Christ, before the foundation of the world; for so early as such he blessed his people, and chose them in Christ (Eph 1:3, 4). 6b3d3. If Christ was the Son of God, with respect to his human nature only, the distinctive phrase "according to the flesh", when used in speaking of him, would be quite impertinent; for it is never said of any mere man, that he is the son of such an one according to the flesh, but only, that he is his son; but the phrase is very pertinently used to distinguish Christ, the Son of God, according to his divine nature, from his being the Son of David, and of the fathers, according to his human nature, (Rom. 1:4, 9:5). 6b3d4. The incarnation of Christ is not the reason of his being the Son of God, but the manifestation of him as such; he was not made, but manifested thereby

to be the Son of God (1 John 1:12, 3:8). In the fulness of time God sent forth his Son-for what? not to be made a Son; he was so before he sent him; but that this Son might be made of a woman, or be made man; that the Word might be made flesh, or become incarnate; and so God, the Son of God, be manifest in the flesh (Gal. 4:4). For, 6b3d5. It is certain that Christ existed, as the Son of God, before his incarnation; and is spoken of in the Old Testament as such; even Nebuchadnezzar, an heathen prince, had a notion of the Son of God; which he might have from Daniel, and other Jews in his palace; for he had many in his dominions, from whom he might learn that there was a glorious Person, who would appear in human nature, under the name of the Son of God; and seeing four persons in the fiery furnace, when only three were cast into it, and the form of the fourth remarkably glorious, he concluded him to be one like him, who had been described to him, (Dan. 3:25; Ezek. 21:10). Agur long before knew that a divine Person existed, as the Son of God; for speaking of the Almighty, and incomprehensible Being, he asks, "What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?" suggesting that as the name, that is, the nature of God is ineffable, he had a Son of the same nature with himself, equally so (Prov. 30:4). Earlier than he, David speaks of the Son of God, begotten by him; whom he calls all the Kings and Judges of the earth to pay divine homage and worship to; and pronounces them blessed that trust in him, (Ps. 2:7, 12) and speaks of him also as his firstborn, who should call him his God and Father, (Ps. 89:26, 27) yea, Christ existed as a Son, not only before Solomon and David were, but before Melchizedek was, for he is said to be made like unto the Son of God, (Heb. 7:3) yea, he existed as such at the creation of the world; for God, by him his Son, made the worlds, (Heb. 1:2) before any creature was in being he was the Son of God; and so the words may be rendered in Psalm 72:17. "Before the sun was, his name was the Son", the Son of God. 6b3d6. If Christ is only the Son of God as he was man, and so called because made man, then he would be in no other class of Sonship than creatures be. Adam being wonderfully made and created out of the dust of the earth, is called the son of God, and all his posterity are the offspring of God, (Luke 3:38; Acts 17:28). Angels are also the sons of God, by creation; but "to which of the angels said he (God) at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?" (Heb. 1:5) and if not to them, much less to any of the sons of men; and therefore Christ's filiation must be in an higher class than theirs; and not to be ascribed to his incarnation; but must be placed to another account. 6b3e. Another cause or reason assigned by the Socinians why Christ is called the Son of God, is his resurrection from the dead; which cannot be the true reason of it; because, 6b3el. He was the Son of God before; as has been proved, and they themselves acknowledge; for if he was the Son of God, through his incarnation, as they say, though wrongly, then before his resurrection; and so not on that account: the mission of Christ into this world, as the Son of God; the testimony bore to his Sonship, at his baptism and transfiguration, by his divine Father; the confession of men and angels, good and bad, already observed; show him to be the Son of God before his resurrection, and so not by it. 6b3e2. If he was the Son of God on that account, he must beget himself, and be the author of his own Sonship, which is notoriously absurd; for he raised himself from the dead, as he predicted he would; and as he had power to do, as he declared, and did it (John 2:19, 10:18). 6b3e3. If so, his Sonship must be metaphorical and figurative, and not proper; whereas, he is often called God's own Son, his proper Son, the Son of himself; and God his own proper Father (Rom. 8:3, 32; John 5:18). 6b3e4. On this account, he cannot be called the only begotten Son of God; for though he may, indeed, on account of his resurrection, be called, as he is, the firstborn from the dead, and the first begotten of the dead, and the firstfruits of them that sleep, (Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5; 1 Cor. 15:20) yet cannot be called the only begotten, since many of the saints rose with him at his resurrection; and all men will be raised at the last day. 6b3e5. If the resurrection of the dead entitles to Sonship, then wicked men would be the sons of God; since there will be a resurrection of the unjust as well as of the just; of some to shame and damnation, as well as of others to everlasting life, (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15) yet these are never called the sons of God; as not on any other, so not on this account; indeed, the dead in Christ, who will rise first, are said to be the "children of God being the children of the

resurrection", (Luke 20:36) not that they then become the children of God, and are so for that reason; for they are so before; but being raised, and put into the possession of the inheritance, they will be manifested, and declared the children of God, "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ"; and so, 6b3e6. The resurrection of Christ from the dead, is only a manifestation of his Sonship; he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead", (Rom. 1:4) and hence it is that the words in Psalm 2:7. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee", are applied to the resurrection of Christ, (Acts 13:25) not that he was then begotten as the Son of God, for he was so before, as has been proved; but he was then manifested to be the only begotten Son of God; and which words are applicable to any time when Christ was declared and manifested to be the Son of God. 6b3f. The last reason I shall take notice of, which the Socinians give of the Sonship of Christ, is his office as Mediator; they say he is called the Son of God, because he was sanctified, or set apart to his office, as such; and was sent into the world to do it, and has executed it, and is now exalted in heaven. And it is not to be wondered at, that they should assert Christ to be the Son of God by office, when it is a notorious sentiment of theirs, that he is only God by office; for the sake of which they endeavour to support this: the text which they build this notion on is John 10:36. "Say one of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?" That Christ is the Son of God, may be concluded from his sanctification and mission; because no other was prophesied of, or promised to be sent, and no other expected to come, but he who was the Son of God; but that his sanctification and mission are the reason of his being so called, cannot be from hence concluded; because he was the Son of God before he was sent. Christ had, in the preceding verses, asserted his equality with God, saying, that he and his Father were one; upon this the Jews charged him with blasphemy; to vindicate himself from this charge, he first argues from his inferior character, as being in office; that if magistrates, without blasphemy, might be called gods, and children of the most High, much more might he be called the Son of God, who was in such an eminent manner sanctified, and sent into the world by the Father; but then he let not the stress of the proof of his Deity and Sonship rest here; but proceeds to prove the same by his doing the same works his Father did; to which he appeals. But that Christ is not the Son of God, by his office as Mediator, the following reasons may be given. 6b3fl. Because if Christ is the Son of God, not by nature, but by office, then he is only the Son of God in an improper and metaphorical sense; as magistrates are called the children of the most High, or sons of God, being in an office under him: whereas, Christ, in a true and proper sense, is the Son of God; he is the Son of the Father in truth, (2 John 5:3) most truly and properly his Son; his own, his only begotten Son, the Son of himself, (Rom. 8:3) his proper Son, (Rom. 8:32) therefore not so in an improper sense. 6b3f2. Because the mediatorial office of Christ is so far from being the ground of his Sonship, that it is his Sonship that is the ground of his mediatorship; for antecedent to his investiture with his office, he must be considered as previously existing under some character or another, and which appears to be his relation to God as his Son. Thus in his inauguration into, and investiture with his kingly office, his Father, in the performance of it, addressed him under this relative character; "unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever", (Heb. 1:8) and of his consecration to his priestly office we read, "The Lord maketh men high priests which have infirmity: but the word of the oath which was since the law", (the eternal council and covenant, made more clear and manifest since the law, Ps. 110:4) "maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore"; that is, not makes the Son a Son, but the Son a priest; (Heb. 7:28) so that he was the Son of God before he was considered as a priest: and with respect to his prophetic office, previous to his investiture with, entrance upon; and discharge of that, he was the Son of God; and, indeed, his relation to God, and nearness to him, made him the only fit and proper Person for it; "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him"; his nature, will, purposes, and promises; all which he was privy to, as being the only begotten Son of the Father, and lying in his bosom, (John 1:18) so that previous to his office as Mediator, and each of the branches of it, he was the Son of God; and therefore

not so by it: when, I say, Christ, as the Son of God, must be considered previous to his being the Mediator; though he is both from eternity; it must be understood, not of priority of time, of which there is none in eternity; but of priority of order; for Christ must be considered as existing as a divine Person, under some character or relation, ere he can be considered as invested with an office; not in order of time, both being eternal; but in order of nature; even as the eternal God, must be considered as existing previous to any act of his; as of eternal election, not in priority of time, the eternal acts of God being as early as himself; but in priority of order, as one thing must be conceived of and considered by our finite minds, before another. 6b3f3. Because he is frequently distinguished as a Son, from the consideration of him in his mediatorial office; as in the eunuch's confession of Faith; "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God", (Acts 8:37) and in the ministry of the apostle Paul, who is said to preach "Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). Now the phrase "Jesus Christ" respects his office as the Saviour, the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King; and if the other phrase, the Son of God, is a term of office also, they coincide, and signify the same thing; and then the sense of them only is, that Christ is the Christ, and the Mediator; the Mediator confessed by the one, and preached by the other; which carry in them no distinct ideas; whereas the meaning is, that the one believed, and the other preached, that Jesus, the Saviour and true Messiah, who had lately appeared with all the true characters of the promised one, was no less than a divine Person, the Son of God (see also 1 John 4:14, 15, 5:5). 6b3f4. Because Christ, as Mediator, is the Servant of God; and especially so he appears in the discharge of some parts of that his office; as in his obedience and suffering death, see (Isa. 42:1, 49:3 53:11; Phil. 2:7, 8). A servant and a son are very different relations, and convey very different ideas; our Lord observes the distinction, (John 8:35) and Christ, as a Son, is distinguished from Moses, as a servant, in the house of God, (Heb. 3:5, 6) whereas, if Christ was a Son by office, or as mediator, he would be no other than a servant, as Moses was, only of an higher rank, and in a greater office; no one is ever called a son because he is a servant; one that is a son may indeed be a servant, but is never called a son on that account; so that this is to lessen the glory of Christ, as the only begotten of the Father, and reduce him to the character and state of a servant. 6b3f5. Because the Sonship of Christ is sometimes spoken of as adding a lustre to his office as Mediator; as when the apostle says, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession", (Heb. 4:14) that which makes this High Priest so great an one, and furnishes out so strong an argument to a constant profession of him, is his being the Son of God, not by office, but by nature; for if this was only a term of office, it would not only coincide with his being an high priest, but there would be no emphasis in it, nor evidence of his greatness; nor such strength in the argument formed upon it. Likewise, the Sonship of Christ is represented as putting a virtue and efficacy into what he has done as Mediator, and therefore must be distinct from his office as such; so particularly the apostle John ascribes the efficacy of his blood, in cleansing from sin, to his being the Son of God; "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son", (there lies the emphasis) "cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Sometimes it is observed, wonderful, that he who is the Son of God, should perform some parts of his office as Mediator; as obedience and suffering death; "Though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered", (Heb. 5:8) but there would be nothing strange and wonderful, that, he, being the Mediator, should perform the part of one; but it lies here, that he, being the Son of God, in the form of God, and equal to him, should appear in the form of a servant, and be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 6b3f6. Because the Sonship of Christ is made use of to express and enhance the love of God, in the gift of him to the sons of men, (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9) which would not be so strongly expressed, and so greatly enhanced, and appear in such a glaring light, if Christ, in such a gift, is considered not as a Son by nature, but as a Servant, and in an office capacity; God has given what is more than men, or than people, for the life of his chosen; to do which would be love; but he has given his own Son; which is a far greater instance of love, (Isa. 43:4). 6b3f7. Lastly, If Christ is the Son of God, and may be

called his begotten Son, by virtue of his constitution as Mediator, it should be shown, that there is something in that constitution which is analogous, or answers to generation and Sonship, and lays a sufficient ground and foundation for Christ being called God's own Son, his proper and only begotten Son; what is there in the first Person's appointing and constituting the second to be a Mediator, that gives him the name of a Father? and what is that in the constitution of the second Person in such an office, that gives him the name of the Son, of the only begotten Son? Having removed the chief and principal of the false causes, and reasons of Christ's Sonship, assigned by the Socinians; I shall proceed to establish the true cause of it; and settle it on its true basis; by assigning it to its proper and sole cause, his eternal generation by the Father; which I shall attempt to do by various passages of scripture. There are some passages of scripture, which have been made use of to prove the eternal generation of the Son of God, I shall not insist upon, particularly Isaiah. 53:8. "Who shall declare his generation?" which is to be understood, neither of the human, nor of the divine generation of Christ, as it was by the ancient writers; not of his human generation; for that the prophet himself declared; as that he would be born, and be born of a virgin, (Isa. 7:14, 9:6, 7) nor of his divine generation, which is declared both by the Father and the Son; though, indeed, the manner of both generations is inexplicable and ineffable, and cannot be declared by men: but the words are either to be understood of Christ's spiritual generation; the seed he should see, (Isa. 53:10) his spiritual seed and offspring; a generation to be accounted of, but not to be counted by men, their number being not to be declared: or, rather, of the wickedness of that age and generation in which Christ should appear in the flesh; called by him, a wicked, adulterous, and faithless generation; the wickedness then rife both in the Gentile and Jewish world, was such as not to be declared; and particularly the barbarity and cruelty of the Jews, in putting Christ to death, and persecuting his apostles, were such as no tongue and pen could fully declare. I have not, in my Treatise on the Trinity, insisted on Micah 5:2 as a proof of the eternal generation of the Son of God; of whom it is there said, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting"; though this has been, and still is, insisted on by great and good men as a proof of it: but when he is said to go forth from the Father, it may seem, as it does to some, rather to intend his mission in time, or as coming into the world; not by change of place, but by assumption of nature, (John 16:28) besides, the phrase is plural; "goings forth"; which seem to denote various acts; whereas that of begetting is a single act: to which may be added, that, that is an act of the Father; these seem to be acts of the Son; and therefore may seem rather to be understood of his goings forth in the covenant, in acts of grace and love towards his people, and delight in them; in approaching to God in a covenant way, and asking them of his Father, and all blessings of grace for them; in becoming their Surety, and engaging to be their Saviour and Redeemer. However, these words are a full proof of the eternal existence of Christ; or otherwise these things could not be predicated of him and his existence so early, under the relation and character of the Son of God, and that previous to his goings forth in a mediatorial way; as before proved. Yet, after all, I see not but that the divine generation of Christ may be included in those goings forth; and be the first and principal, and the foundation of the rest; since the contrast in the text is between the Deity and humanity of Christ; or, between his two births and sonships, divine and human; and the phrase of going forth, suits very well with the modern notion of generation, before observed; and the word K2T, is frequently used of generation, (Gen. 46:26; Isa. 11:1, 48:1,19) and, indeed, in the very text itself. But, The text in Psalm 2:7 though some have parted with it, as a proof of this point, I choose to retain; "The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee"; which are the words of the Messiah, the Lord's anointed; against whom the kings of the earth set themselves, (Ps. 2:2) the King set and anointed over the holy hill of Zion, (Ps. 2:6) and who says in the beginning of this verse, "I will declare the decree"; which he speaks either as King, signifying, that he would, as such, declare and publish the laws, statutes, and judgments; so the word signifies; by which his subjects should be ruled and governed: or as a Prophet, who would declare the covenant, as the Targum, the covenant of grace, the things contained in it; and none so lit as he, who is the

messenger of it: or the counsel and decree, as we render it, the scheme of man's redemption and salvation by himself; or the gospel, called the whole counsel of God, (Acts 20:27) for this respects not what follows, the sonship of Christ; though that is the ground and foundation of the whole gospel scheme; but that depends not on any decree, counsel!, or will of God, but is of nature; and the mention of it is introduced, to show the greatness and excellency of the Person spoken of in the context; and so to aggravate the wickedness of his enemies; since the King they opposed, is no other than the natural and proper Son of God; and in like manner are these words quoted in Hebrews 1:5 to show the pre- eminence of Christ to the angels: and as for the date, "this day", it may well enough be thought to be expressive of eternity, since one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and as eternity itself; and which is expressed by days of eternity in Micah 5:2 as the eternal God himself is called the Ancient of days, (Dan. 7:9) and, indeed, this passage is applicable to any day or time in which Christ is declared and manifested to be the Son of God; as at his incarnation, (Heb. 1:6; John 3:8) and at his baptism and transfiguration, (Matthew 3:17 17:5) as it is to the time of his resurrection; when he was declared to be the Son of God (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4). And agreeable to this sense of the words, as it respects his eternal generation, and his being the natural and proper Son of God, he is after treated as his heir, and bid to ask what he would for his inheritance, (Rom. 1:8, 9) and, is represented as the object of religious worship and adoration, and of trust and confidence, (Rom. 1:12) which belong to none but a divine person. So Justin Martyr interprets this passage of the manifestation of Christ's generation to men. The text in Proverbs 8:22 though a glorious proof of Christ's eternal existence, yet I formerly thought not so clear an one of his eternal generation. But, upon a more close consideration of it, it appears to me a very clear one; as the phrases in this, and some following verses, being "possessed, brought forth", and "brought up", clearly show: much darkness has been spread over it, by a wrong translation in the Greek version, which renders the words, "the Lord created me", &c. and which has led into more errors than one. Arius from hence concluded, that Christ, as a divine person, was created by his Father in some instant in eternity, and that he was made by him, not of the same nature with him, but of a like nature to him; and is his first and most excellent creature, and whom he made use of in the creation of others: but if the Wisdom of God, the person here speaking, was created by God, then God must be without his Logos, word, and wisdom, until he was created; whereas, he was always with him; and besides, he is the Creator, and not a creature; for all things were made by him (John 1:1-3). Some, of late, have put a new sense on these words, equally as absurd as the former, and interpret them, of the creation of the human soul of Christ in eternity; which, they say, was then made and taken up into union with God. But to this sense it must be objected, 6b 1. That the human soul of Christ is not a person, nor is even the whole human nature, which is called a thing, and not a person, (Luke 1:35) it never subsisted of itself, but always in the Person of the Son of God; and there are wise reasons in the economy and scheme of man's salvation, that so it should be; whereas wisdom here speaking is all along in the context represented as a Person, "I Wisdom", (Prov. 8:12) "the Lord possessed me" (Prov. 8:22 "I was set up", Prov. 8:23, &c). 6b2. The human soul of Christ is only a part of the human nature; whereas Christ has assumed a whole human nature, a true body, and a reasonable soul; and both were necessary to become a sacrifice; as they have been, (Isa. 53:10; Heb. 10:10). According to this notion, Christ assumed the human nature by parts, and these as widely distant as eternity and time; one part assumed in eternity, another part in time; what a sad mangle is this of our Lord's human nature! is this to be made in all things like unto his brethren? of the two, it would be more agreeable that the whole human nature was assumed so early; but was that the case, it would not be the seed of the woman, nor the seed of Abraham, nor the son of David, nor the son of Mary; nor would Christ be a partaker of "our" flesh and blood; and it should be considered, whether this would have been of any avail to us. 6b3. But what of all things is most absurd, this human soul is said to be created in eternity, or before time; which is a contradiction in terms, time being nothing else but the measure of a creature's duration; as soon as a creature was, time was; time begins with that, let it be

when it will; and therefore cannot be before time: suppose a creature to be made millions of ages before the common date of time, the creation of the world, time must be reckoned from the existence of that creature; but what is worst of all, is the fatal consequence of this to divine revelation; for if there was anything created before time, or before the world was, whether an angel or a man, or a part of man, the human soul, or the whole human nature of Christ, our Bible must begin with a falsehood; and then who will believe what is said in it afterwards? which asserts, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"; that is, in the beginning of time, or when time first began. And this is so agreeable to reason, that Plato says, time and heaven were made together; and Timaeus Locrus, God made the world with time; and Plato defines time thus, Time is the motion of the sun, and the measure of motion; which was as soon as a creature was made; the first things that God made were the heavens and the earth; and therefore if anything was created before them, this must be an untruth. How careful should men be of venting their own whims and fancies, to the discredit of the Bible, and to the risk of the ruin of divine Revelation. Should it be said, Were not the angels created before? I answer, No: surely no man, thinking soberly, will assert it: how can it be thought, that the angels of heaven, as they are called, should be made before there was a heaven for them to be in? Should the text in (Job 38:7) be produced in proof of it, let it be observed, that it is far from being clear that angels are there meant, since they are never elsewhere compared to stars, nor called the sons of God; rather good men are there meant, to whom both epithets agree; but be it understood of angels or men, it is not to be connected with (Job 38:6) nor respects the time of laying the foundation and cornerstone of the earth; but the phrase in (Job 38:4) is to be repeated at the beginning, "Where wast thou when the morning stars sang together?" &c. and so refers to some time soon after the creation of the heavens and the earth; and to a meeting, whether of angels or men, in which the praises of God, on account of his works, were celebrated, before Job had a being. No, neither angels nor men, nor any other creature, were before time; this is peculiar to Jehovah; this is a claim he makes, and none else can put in for it; "Before the day was, I am he", (Isa. 43:13) that is, before there was a day, before time was, I existed, when none else did; none existed in and from eternity but Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; not an angel nor an human soul: it is a notion of Origen, condemned by Jerome as heretical, that the soul of the Saviour was, before he was born of Mary; and that this is that which, when he was in the form of God, he thought no robbery to be equal with God. What has led men into this notion of the human nature of Christ, either in part, or in whole, being created before time, or in eternity, is another error, or mistake, as one error generally leads to another; and that is, that Christ could not take upon him, nor execute the office of Mediator, without it; whereas, it is most certain, that a divine Person can take upon him an office, and execute it, without assuming an interior nature; as the Holy Spirit of God has; he, in the covenant of grace, took upon him the office of applying the grace and blessings of the covenant, the things of Christ in it, to the covenant ones; in doing which he performs the part of a comforter to them, and a glorifier of Christ; and yet never assumed any inferior nature; and this without any degradation of his person: and it is easy to observe, among men, that when two powers are at variance, one, even superior to them both, will interpose as a mediator, without at all lessening his dignity and character. Christ, as a divine Person, could and did take upon him the office of Mediator, without assuming human nature; it was sufficient for his constitution as such, that he agreed to assume it in time, when it was necessary; and there are various parts of his mediatorial office, which he could and did execute in eternity without it; he could and did draw nigh to his divine Father, and treat with him about terms of peace and reconciliation for men; he could and did covenant with him on the behalf of his elect; which to do, no more required an human nature in him, than in the Father; he could and did become a Surety for them in the covenant, and receive promises and blessings for them; and agreed to do all for them that law and justice could require: and to make such terms, agreements, promises, &c. of what use and avail would an human soul, or the whole human nature, have been unto him? There are other parts of his office, indeed, which required the actual

assumption of the human nature; and when it was proper for him to perform them, then, and not before, was it necessary for him to assume it; such as obedience to the law, shedding of blood, and suffering death to make peace, reconciliation, and atonement for his people. Wherefore, if this translation of Proverbs 8:22. "He created me", is to be retained, it is better to interpret it of the constitution of Christ in his office, as Mediator, as the word "create" is used in common language, of making a king, peer, judge, or one in any office: but this is rather meant in the following verse, "I was set up, or anointed", invested with the office of Mediator; anointing being used at the investiture of kings, priests, and prophets, with their office, is put for the act of investiture itself; for Wisdom, or Christ, proceeds in this account of himself, in a very regular and orderly manner; he first gives an account of his eternal existence, as the Son of God, by divine generation; and then of constitution, as Mediator, in his office capacity; this latter is expressed by his being "set up", and the former by his being "possessed" or "begotten"; so the same Greek version renders this word in (Zech. 13:5) and it may be rendered here, "the Lord begat me", and so possessed him as his own Son, laid a claim to him, and enjoyed him as such; for this possession is not in right of creation, in such sense as he is the possessor of heaven and earth, (Gen. 14:19, 22) but in right of paternity, in which sense the word is used, (Deut. 32:6) as a father lays claim to, possesses and enjoys his own son, being begotten by him, or signifies possession by generation, (Gen. 4:1) the following phrase, "in the beginning of his way", should be rendered without the preposition in, which is not in the text; for Wisdom, or Christ, is not in this clause, expressing the date of his being begotten, but describing him himself, who is the begotten of the Father; as "the beginning of his way", of his way of grace; with whom God first begun, taking no one step without him, nor out of him; his purposes of grace being in him, the scheme of reconciliation formed in him, the covenant of grace made with him, and all grace given to the elect in him; in whom they were chosen: and all this "before his works of old", the works of creation; of which Christ is the beginning; the first and co-efficient cause, (Rev. 3:14) and this sense of the words, as understood of the begetting of Christ, is confirmed by some other phrases after used, as of being "brought forth", (Prov. 8:24) as conceived, as the Vulgate Latin version; or begotten, as the Targum and Syriac version; so the Greek version, of (Prov. 8:25) is, he "begat" me; and the word is used of generation in (Job 15:7; Ps. 51:5) and is repeated, (Prov. 8:25) partly to excite attention to it, as being of great moment and importance, and partly to observe the certainty of it; the eternal generation of Christ being an article of faith, most surely to be believed: Wisdom further says of himself; "Then was I by him, as one brought up with him", (Prov. 8:30) being begotten by him, and being brought forth, he was brought up with his Father; which expresses the most tender regard to him, and the utmost delight in him. The word may be rendered, carried in his bosom, as a son by a nursing father (Num. 11:12; John 1:18). To these proofs might be added, all those scriptures which speak of Christ as the begotten, the only begotten of the Father; which have been referred to, (John 1:14, 18, 3:16; 1 John 4:9) which cannot be understood of him as a man, for as such he was not begotten, and so was without father, the antitype of Melchizedek; and whose generation must be understood not of his nature; for his nature is the same with the nature of the Father and Spirit, and therefore if his was begotten, theirs would be also; but of his person; as in natural, so in divine generation, person begets person, and not essence begets essence; and this begetting is not out of, but "in" the divine essence; it being an immanent and internal act in God; and in our conception of it, as has been already observed, we are to remove every thing impure and imperfect, division and multiplication, priority and posteriority, dependence, and the like; and as for the modus, or manner of it, we must be content to be ignorant of it, as we are of our own generation, natural and spiritual; and of the incarnation of Christ, and of the union of the human nature to his divine Person. If we must believe nothing but what we can comprehend, or account for the manner, or "how" it is, we must be obliged to disbelieve some of the perfections of God; as eternity, immensity, and omniscience, &c. yea, that there is a God, or that there are three distinct Persons in the Godhead; which, however, clearly revealed in scripture "that" they are, yet the manner, or "how" they are, how they subsist distinctly as three Persons,

and yet but one God, is incomprehensible and inexplicable by us: and at this rate, there are many things in nature, and in philosophy, which must be given up, which yet are certain; since the manner how they be, cannot be explained; it is enough, that it is plain they are, though "how" cannot be said; as the union of our souls and bodies; and the influence that matter and spirit have on each other; and in the present case, it is enough that Christ is revealed as begotten of the Father; though the manner how he is begotten, cannot be explained: Athanasius expresses the thing well; '"How' the Father begat the Son, I do not curiously inquire; and 'how' he sent forth the Spirit, I do not likewise curiously inquire; but I believe that both the Son is begotten, and the holy Spirit proceeds, in a manner unspeakable and impassable." And says Gregory Nazianzen, "Let the generation of God be honoured in silence; it is a great thing, (abundantly so) for thee to learn or know, that he is begotten; but "how" he is begotten, is not granted to thee to understand, nor, indeed, to the angels." "It is enough for me, says the same ancient divine, that I hear of the Son; and that he is "of" the Father; and that the one is a Father, and the other a Son: and nothing besides this do I curiously inquire after. Do you hear of the generation of the Son? do not curiously inquire the to rccoc;, the "how" it is: Do you hear that the Spirit proceeds from the Father? do not curiously inquire the to otuoc;, the "manner" how he does; for if you curiously inquire into the generation of the Son, and the procession of the Spirit; I also, in my turn, will curiously inquire of thee, the temperament of soul and body; how thou art dust, and yet the image of God; what it is that moves thee, or what is moved; how it is the same that moves, and is moved; how the sense abides in one, and attracts that which is without; how the mind abides in thee, and begets a word in another mind; and how it imparts understanding by the word: and, not to speak of greater things, what the circumference of the heavens, what the motion of the stars, or their order, or measure, or conjunction, or distance; what the borders of the sea; from whence the winds blow; or the revolutions of the seasons of the year, and the effusions of showers? If thou knowest not any of these things, O man-of which sense is a witness, how canst thou think to know God accurately, "how" and "what" he is? this is very unreasonable." Nor should the phrase, "eternal generation", be objected to, because not syllabilically expressed in scripture; it is enough that the thing is which is meant by it: nor are the words, a "Trinity of Persons", or three distinct Persons in one God; nor the word "satisfaction", expressive of a doctrine on which our salvation depends. It is most certain, that Christ is the Son of God; and it is as certain, that he is the "begotten" Son of God; and if begotten, then the word generation may be used of him, for what is begotten is generated; and since he is God's own Son, or his proper Son, he must be so by proper generation, and not by improper, or figurative generation, which must be the case if a Son by office; and if he is the Son of God by proper generation, he must be so either as man, or as a divine Person; not as man, for as such he was not begotten at all; but was made of a woman, and born of a virgin: it remains, that he must be so considered, as a divine Person; and since it was from everlasting, before the earth was, or any creature had a being, that he was begotten, and brought forth, and as early brought up, as a Son with his Father; with the utmost safety and propriety may eternal generation be attributed to him; and, indeed, in no other sense can he be the Son of God. To close all; this phrase, "the Son of God", intends what is essential and natural to him; and suggests to us, that he is the true and natural Son of God; not a Son in an improper and figurative sense, or not by office, but by nature; that, as such, he is a divine Person, God, the true God, (Heb. 1:8; 1 John 5:20) that he is equal with God, as the Jews understood him; in which they were not mistaken, since our Lord never went about to correct them, which he would have done had they misunderstood him, (John 5:17, 18, 10:30) and it is to be observed, that he has been concluded to be the Son of God from his divine perfections and works; from his omniscience, (John 1:48, 49) from his omnipotence, (Matthew 14:33) and from the marvellous things that happened at his crucifixion (Matthew 27:54). In short, as the phrase, "the Son of man", denotes one that is truly man; so the phrase, "the Son of God", must intend one that is truly God, a divine Person; and as Christ is called the Son of man, from the nature in which he is man; so he is called the Son of God, from the nature in which he is God. I

have been the longer upon the Sonship of Christ, because it is that upon which the distinction in the Godhead depends; take that away, and it cannot be proved there is any distinction of persons in it. I proceed, 6c. Thirdly, To consider the third Person, and his personal relation; or distinctive relative property; which is, to be "breathed", or to be the "breath" of God; which is never said of the Father and Son; and which, with propriety, gives him the name of "Spirit", or "Breath", as he is called (Ezek. 37:9). I shall treat of this very briefly, since the scriptures speak sparingly of it. It should be observed, that though he is most frequently called, the Holy Spirit, yet it is not his being of an holy nature, and of a spiritual substance, which distinguishes him from the Father and the Son; for since they are of the same nature, which is perfectly pure and holy, they must be equally holy, as he is: and since God, essentially considered, is a Spirit or spiritual, such is God, personally considered; or such is each person in the Godhead. Nor does he take his name of Spirit, or Breath, from any actions of his, on, in, or with respect to creatures; as in breathing into Adam the breath of life, (Gen. 2:7) or in breathing the breath of spiritual life, in the regeneration and conversion of men, (Ezek. 37:9; John 3:8) nor from his inspiration of the scriptures, (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21) nor from the disciples receiving the Holy Ghost through Christ's breathing upon them (John 20:22). Though all these are symbolical of, analogous to, and serve to illustrate his original character, and personal relation and distinction, which denominates him the breath of the Almighty, (Job 33:4) and distinguishes him from Jehovah the Father, the breath of whose mouth he is called, (Ps. 33:6) and from Christ the Son of God, the breath of whose mouth he is also said to be, (2 Thess. 2:8) and the Spirit, or breath, of the Son, (Gal. 4:6) and as Jehovah the Father was never without his Word, the Son, so neither the Father, nor the Word, were ever without their Breath, or Spirit: let none be offended, that the third Person is called Spirit, or Breath, since this suggests not, a mere power, or quality, but designs a Person; so an human person is called, (Lam. 4:20) and here a divine Person; to whom personal acts, and these divine, are ascribed; such as the establishing of the heavens, the making of man, the editing of the scriptures, and filling the apostles with extraordinary gifts, (Ps. 33:6; Job 33:4; 2 Peter 1:21; John 20:22) whose distinct personality, and proper Deity, together with the personality and Deity of the Father and Son, will be more particularly considered in the next chapters. I take no notice of the procession of the Spirit from Father and Son, which, though it illustrates his distinction from them, yet rather seems to be understood of his coming forth from them, not with respect to his Person, but his office, in a way of mission by them, to be the Convincer and Comforter of men, and the Applier of all grace unto them (see John 15:26, 16:7, 8).

Chapter 29

OF THE DISTINCT PERSONALITY, AND DEITY OF THE FATHER.

Though what has been already observed, clearly shows there is a distinction of Persons in the Godhead, and wherein that distinction lies; yet other things may be added, which will serve to illustrate and confirm it; and which will be produced, not as making it, but as making it more clearly to appear. A person is by some defined, "An individual that subsists, is living, intelligent, is not sustained by another, nor is a part of another;" and which is true of each of the three Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit. I shall begin with the personality of the Father; the word "Person" is expressly used of him in Hebrews 1:3 where Christ his Son, by whom he made the worlds, is called, "the express image of his person": the word UKOOtaaic;, here used, is translated "substance" in Hebrews 11:1 and some would have it so rendered here; and some of the Latin writers did use the word "substantia, substance": but then they understood it, and made use of it, just in the same sense as we do the word person; but finding it to be an ambiguous word, and that it tended to lead men to imagine there were three distinct divine Beings, they left it off, and chose the word person, as less exceptionable; the Greek writers, and some even before the council of Nice, took the word here used, in the same sense as we do, for "subsistence", or person; and so it is here rendered by many learned men, as Valla, Vatablus, Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, Piscator, Paneus, and others; in which translation we may safely acquiesce. The definition of a person agrees with the Father of Christ, as before

observed. The Father of Christ is an individual, and so distinguishable from the divine nature he is possessed of, in common with the Son and Spirit; he subsists of himself, he does not owe his being to another, nor is he upheld in it by another; nor is he possessed only of a part, but of the whole Deity; he is the living Father, has life in himself, and not from another, (John 5:26, 6:57) and is intelligent, knows himself, his Son and Spirit, and all things (Matthew 11:27). The personality of the Father may be concluded from those personal actions which are ascribed to him; for besides begetting the Son, which is what distinguishes him from the other two persons, there are other acts which illustrate and confirm the distinction made, though they do not make it; as,

1. The creation of all things is ascribed to him; he is said, as the Father of Christ, to make the worlds by him his Son, and to create all things by him; not as an instrument, but as a co-efficient cause (Heb. 1:2; Eph. 3:9).

2. The works of providence, as upholding and sustaining all creatures in their being, supplying them with all things necessary, governing the world, ordering and disposing of all persons and things in it, are attributed to him, in distinction from his Son, though in conjunction with him, "my Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17).

3. The mission of his Son into the world to be the Saviour of men, shows his distinct personality from him, which is often said of him; now he that sends, and he that is sent, cannot be the same person, but must be distinct; indeed the Spirit of God is said also to send Christ, as well as the Father, (Isa. 48:16) but then, though the Son is sent by both, and the Spirit is sent both by the Father and the Son, yet the Father is never said to be sent by either; he is always the sender, and never the sent.

4. The several distinct acts of grace towards the elect in Christ, will serve to evince the distinct personality of the Father. Men are said to be elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, (1 Peter 1:2) and are said to be chosen by him in Christ unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and therefore must be distinct from Christ, in whom, and to whose salvation they are chosen; and from the Spirit, through whose sanctification they are chosen to the obtaining of the glory of Christ, (Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14) planning the scheme of man's salvation by Christ; reconciling, or forming the scheme of reconciliation in Christ; consulting in the council of peace with him about it, are personal acts, and distinguish him from Christ; making a covenant with his Son on account of elect men, putting their persons into his hands, blessing them with all spiritual blessings in him, and giving grace to them in him before the world was; as they are personal acts, so they show him to be distinct from his Son, with whom he covenanted, and whom he entrusted with the said persons and things: his drawing them by the powerful influences of his grace in time, to come to Christ and believe in him, (John 6:44) promising and giving the Spirit as a convincer, comforter, enlightener, and strengthener, with many other things, serve to illustrate and confirm his distinct personality. Now we call the Father the first person, not that he is so in order of time or causality, and as if he was "fons Deitatis", the fountain of Deity, as some good men have wrongly called him; for rather the Deity is the fountain of the divine persons, from whence they arise together, and in which they subsist, and in which they have no superiority and preeminence of one another; but as it is necessary to speak of them in some order, it seems most proper to place the Father first, whence we call him the first person, and then the Son, and then the Spirit; in which order they are usually put in scripture; though to show there is a perfect equality between them, this order is sometimes inverted. That the Father of Christ, as he is a person, so a divine person, will not be doubted; nor is his Deity called in question; and yet it may be proper to say something of it, and establish it; which may be done, not only by observing that he is expressly and distinctly called God, (Rom. 15:6; Gal. 1:1; Phil. 2:11) but this may be proved,

1. From his divine perfections: God necessarily exists, owes his being to no other, subsists of himself, and is independent of any; such is the Father of Christ, he "has life in himself" and of himself, and does not derive it from another (John 5:26). God is from everlasting to everlasting, without beginning and end; so is the Father of Christ, he is he "which is, and which was, and which is to come" (Rev. 1:4). God is immense and omnipresent, cannot be circumscribed

by space, he fills heaven and earth, and is contained in neither; such is the Father of Christ, of whom he often speaks as in heaven, and yet with him on earth, and with all his people, at all times, and in all ages (John 14:23, 16:32). God is omniscient, knows all persons and things; and so does the Father of Christ, he knows the Son in such sense as no other does, and knows that which neither the angels nor the Son, as man, know, even the day and hour of judgment, (Matthew 11:27; Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7; 2 Cor. 11:31). God is omnipotent, he can do all things; and so can the Father of Christ, "Abba, Father", says Christ, "all things are possible unto thee" (Mark 14:36; Matthew 19:26; John 10:29). Once more, God is immutable, not subject to any change and variation; God, the Father of Christ, is the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning, (James 1:17) he is unchangeable in his purposes and promises made in Christ, and in his love which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. In short, there is no perfection in Deity but what God, the Father of Christ, is possessed of.

2. His Deity will appear from the works which are ascribed to him, and which none but God could do; such as making the heaven, the earth and sea, and all that in them are; and who as the maker of them is addressed by the apostle, (Acts 4:24-27) and hence by Christ called Father, Lord of heaven and earth, (Matthew 11:25) and the works of providence, before observed, are ascribed to him, as supporting the world by his power, governing it by his wisdom, and supplying it by his goodness, which none but God could do: (see Matthew 6:26, 32) And his mighty acts of grace in quickening sinners dead in sins, in doing which the same power is put forth as in raising Christ from the dead, (Eph. 2:1, 1:19) and in forgiving the sins of men, which none but God can do, (Mark 2:7) and for which Christ prayed to his Father on the behalf of his enemies, (Luke 23:34) to which may be added the resurrection of the dead, which is purely a divine work, and requires almighty power. The resurrection of Christ is most frequently ascribed to him, and he will raise the dead at the last day (1 Cor. 6:14). From these and from many other divine works, may the Deity of the Father be concluded, as well as,

3. From the worship due to him, and given to him. None but God is and ought to be the object of religious worship and adoration; "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve", (Matthew 4:10) now true worshippers of God "worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him", (John 4:23) and the Father of Christ is frequently represented as the object of faith, hope, and love; to whom prayer is to be made, and to whom prayer was made both by Christ and his apostles; how often are grace and peace wished for from him in the several epistles? and he stands first in the form of baptism, which is a solemn act of divine and religious worship.

Chapter 30

OF THE DISTINCT PERSONALITY, AND DEITY OF THE SON.

That the Son of God is a person, and a divine person distinct from the Father and the Spirit, cannot be doubted; for since his Father is a person, and he is the "express image of his person", he must be a person too; and he must be the express image of him, as he himself is a divine person, the Son of God, and truly God; and not as he is man and mediator; not as he is man, or as having an human nature, for his Father never had any, and therefore he could not be the image of him in that respect; for though man is the image of God as to some qualities in him, yet is he never called his character or express image, much less the express image of any of the persons in the Deity: nor as mediator, and in an office capacity, for his Father was never a mediator, nor in an office: it remains therefore that it must be the express image of his person, as he himself is a divine person, abstracted from any consideration of his human nature, and of his office. For as Plato says, that which is like must needs be of the same species with that to which it is like. The definition of a Person agrees with him: he is an individual, distinct, though not separate from the divine nature, he has in common with the Father and the Spirit; he subsists of himself in that nature distinctly, and independently; is not a part of another, the whole fullness of the Godhead dwells in him; nor is his human nature, which he assumed in time, a part of his person, nor adds anything to his personality; but being taken up into union with his person, subsists in it; he has life in himself, and is the living

God; is intelligent, has understanding and will; knows himself, his Father and the Spirit, and all creatures and things, and does whatsoever he pleases. Besides the distinctive, relative property, or personal relation of the Son, which is to be begotten, and which gives and makes the distinction of him, as a divine person, from the Father and Spirit, who are never said to be begotten; there are many other things which show, or make him appear to be a distinct person.

1. His being with God as the Word, (John 1:1) and with his Father as a Son, as one brought up with him, (Prov. 8:30) clearly expresses his distinct personality; he must be a person to be with, and to be brought up with another; and he must be distinct from him with whom he is; he cannot with any propriety be said to be with himself, or to be brought up with himself.

2. His being set up from everlasting as mediator, and the covenant head of the elect; the Father making a covenant with him, and putting the persons of the chosen ones, with all the blessings of grace for them, into his hands, show him to be a person; a mere name and character could not be said to be set up, to be covenanted with, or to have persons and things committed to his care and charge; and these show him to be a distinct person from him who set him up, and entrusted him with all these persons and things (see Prov. 8:23; Ps. 89:3, 28; Deut. 33:3; Eph. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:9).

3. His being sent in the fullness of time to be the Saviour of his people, and that under the character of the Son of God, shows him to be distinct from the Father, whose Son he is, and by whom he was sent; if he was not a person, but a mere name, he could not be sent; and he must be distinct from him that sent him; he that sends, and he that is sent, cannot be one and the same person; or else it must be said, that he sent himself, which is too gross and absurd to be admitted; see (Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4; 1 John 4:9, 14).

4. His becoming a sacrifice, and making satisfaction for the sins of men, and so the Redeemer and Saviour of them, plainly declare his distinct personality. Was he not a person, he could not offer himself a sacrifice, and he must be distinct from him to whom he offered himself; was he not a person, he could not make satisfaction, or reconcile men to God; or, in other words, make reconciliation and atonement for sin; these are personal acts, and he must be distinct from him to whom the satisfaction, reconciliation, and atonement are made; or to whom men are reconciled by him; if he has redeemed men to God by his blood, as he has, he must be a person that is the redeemer of men, and he must be distinct from him to whom he has redeemed them; for he cannot with propriety be said to reconcile and redeem them to himself; see (Eph 5:2; Heb. 9:14; Rom. 5:10, 11; Rev. 5:9).

5. His ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, show him to be a person that ascended, and is sat down; and though it was in human nature that he ascended and sat down, yet it was God in that nature "God is gone up with a shout" (Ps. 47:5). "Thou", the Lord God, "hast ascended on high", (Ps. 68:17, 18). "The Lord said to my Lord, sit on my right hand", (Ps. 110:1) and he must be distinct from his God and our God, from his Lather and our Lather, to whom he ascended, and cannot be the same person with him at whose right hand he sits, (John 20:17; Heb. 1:13).

6. His advocacy and intercession with his Father, is a plain proof of his distinct personality. He is said to be an "advocate with the Father", (1 John 2:1) and therefore must be a person to act the part of an advocate; and must be distinct from him with whom he advocates; unless it can be thought he is an advocate with himself; he himself says, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter", meaning the Spirit of truth, as next explained (John 14:16, 17). Now he must be distinct from the Father to whom he prays, for surely he cannot be supposed to pay to himself; and he must be distinct from the Spirit, for whom he prays. He appears in the presence of God for his people, and ever lives to make intercession for them, and must be a person to do this; and must be distinct from him in whose presence he appears, and to whom he makes intercession; for he cannot with any propriety he said to appear in his own presence for his people, and to mediate and make intercession for them with himself (see Heb. 7:25, 9:24).

7. His judging the world at the last day, with all the circumstances thereof; gathering all nations before him, dividing them, and setting them, some on his right hand and others on his left, and passing the definitive sentence on them, prove him to be a person,

a divine person, and distinct from the Father and the Spirit; for as for "the Father, he judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son", (John 5:22) nor is ever the final judgment of the world ascribed to the Spirit (see Matthew 25:31-41; Acts 10:42, 17:31).

8. It is promised to the saints that they shall be with Christ, where he is; see him as he is, and behold his glory, and shall reign with him for evermore; and he is represented as the object of their praise, wonder, and worship, to all eternity; and that as distinct from the Father and the Holy Ghost; all which, and much more, show him to be a person, and to be distinct from them both; for surely he must be a person, a divine and distinct one, whom the saints shall he, live and dwell with to all eternity; and whom they shall praise, serve, and adore throughout endless ages. The Deity of Christ may he next considered, and proved; or, that he is a divine Person, truly and properly God. Not a made or created God, as say the Arians. He was made flesh, and made of a woman; but not made God; for then he must make himself, which is absurd; since "without him was not anything made that was made; but all things were made by him" (John 1:3). Nor God by office, as say the Socinians; for then he would be God only in an improper sense; as magistrates are called gods; and not truly and properly God: nor God by name only; as there are called lords many, and gods many; such were the gods of the heathens, inanimate, irrational, lifeless beings, and so could have no divinity in them. But he is God by nature; as these were not; having the whole essence and nature of God in him. This will appear,

First, From the names which are given to him; he has the same glorious names the most high God has; as Ejeh, I AM that I AM, (Ex. 3:14) to which our Lord refers, and takes to himself, (John 8:58) and Jehovah, which is incommunicable to a creature, and peculiar to the most High, (Ps. 83:18) it is not given to angels; for wherever an angel is so called, not a created but the uncreated angel is meant; nor to the ark, (2 Sam. 6:2) for not the ark, but God, whose the ark was, is there called by the name of the Lord of hosts: nor to Jerusalem, (Jer. 33:16) but to the Messiah, (Jer. 23:6) for the words may be rendered, "This is the name wherewith he shall be called by her, the Lord our Righteousness": nor to the church absolutely, (Ezek. 48:35) but in composition, or with addition; and is only symbolical of Jehovah's presence being with her; and the same may be said of mount Moriah; and of some altars, called Jehovah- Jireh, Jehovah-Nissi, and Jehovah-Shalom; which are only symbolical, and designed to call to remembrance the wonderful appearance of Jehovah; the gracious help, and divine assistance, he granted to his people in those places, (Gen. 22:14; Ex 17:15; Judg. 6:24) nor is this name given to priests and judges, (De 19:17) for Jehovah is not to be explained by them; but is distinguished from them; and though he is joined with them, this only designs his presence in judiciary affairs, agreeable to (Ps. 82:1) if, therefore, it can be proved that the name Jehovah is given to Christ, it will prove him to be the most High over all the earth.

Now we are told that God spake to Moses, and said, "I am the Lord", or Jehovah; by which name he was not known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that is, not by that only, or that was not so fully made known to them, as it had been to Moses, and to the Israelites by him, (Ex. 6:2, 3, 3:14) which person that appeared to Moses, and said those words, is called the Angel of the Lord, (Ex. 3:2) not a created angel, (Ex. 3:6) but an uncreated one; and must be understood, not of God the Father, who is never called an angel; but of the Son of God, the Angel of his presence, who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, went before them, and led them through the Red Sea, and wilderness, to the land of Canaan, (Ex 3:8, 13:21, 14:19, 23:20; Isa. 63:9) he, whom the Israelites tempted in the wilderness, is expressly called Jehovah, (Ex 17:7) and nothing is more evident than that this Person was Christ, (1 Cor. 10:9) he whom Isaiah saw on a throne, making a very magnificent appearance, is not only called Adonai, (Isa. 6:1) but by the seraphim, Jehovah, (Isa. 6:3) and so by Isaiah, (Isa. 6:5), who was bid to say to the Jews, (Isa. 6:8, 9). "Hear ye indeed", &c. which words Christ applies to himself; and observes that, "those things Isaiah said, when he saw his glory and spoke of him" (John 12:39, 40, 41). There is a prophecy in (Isa. 40:3). "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord", or of Jehovah, "make straight in the desert, and high way for our God", which, by the evangelist Matthew, is applied unto, and interpreted of John the Baptist, (Matthew 3:1-3) wherefore, the

Jehovah, whose way he was to prepare, and our God, whose paths he was to make straight, could be no other than Christ; whose harbinger and forerunner John was, and whose way and paths were prepared and made straight by him, through his preaching the doctrine of repentance, administering the ordinance of baptism, and declaring the kingdom of heaven, or of the Messiah, was at hand. Moreover, the Messiah, or Christ, is expressly called, the Lord, or Jehovah, our righteousness, in (Jer. 23:6) it being his work, as Mediator, to bring in everlasting righteousness; and is the end of the law for it, and is made righteousness to everyone that believes. Once more, Jehovah promises to pour forth the Spirit of grace and supplication on some persons described in (Zech. 12:10) and then adds, "They shall look upon me", Jehovah, "whom they have pierced"; which was fulfilled in Christ, when one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, (John 19:34, 37) the same words are referred to, and applied to Christ (Rev. 1:7). Now, since in these, and in many other places, Christ is intended by Jehovah, he must be truly and properly God, since this name is incommunicable to any other.

It may be observed also, that in some places of scripture, Christ is absolutely called God; as in Psalm 45:6, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever"; where he is distinguished from God his Father, (Ps. 45:7) and the words are expressly applied to him as the Son of God (Heb. 1:8). "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God", &c. yea, Christ calls himself God; as he well might, since he is in the form of God, and therefore thought it no robbery to be equal to him; saying, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else; I have swore by myself", &c. (Isa. 45:22, 23) which last words, in connection with the other, are, by the apostle Paul, applied to Christ (Rom. 14:10-12). The evangelist John, says of the Word, or Son of God, who was made flesh, and dwelt among men, and so cannot be understood of any but Christ, that "the Word was God", (John 1:1, 14) and the same inspired writer observes, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us", (1 John 3:16) from whence it follows, that he that laid down his life for men, which can only be said of Christ, and wherein his love to them appeared, must be God.

And Christ is not only called God absolutely, but with some additional epithets, with possessive pronouns, as, our God, the Jews were waiting for, and John was the forerunner of, (Isa. 25:9, 40:3) "your God", who should come when miracles would be wrought as proofs of it, (Isa. 35:4, 5) "their God", (Luke 1:16) "my Lord, and my God", by Thomas (John 20:28). Now though angels, magistrates, and judges, are called gods in an improper and metaphorical sense; yet never called our gods, your gods, &c. Christ is said to be Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, that is, God manifest in the flesh, (Matthew 1:22; 1 Tim. 3:16). Some additional characters are given of Christ, when he is called God; which show him to be truly and properly God; as, "the mighty God", in (Isa. 9:6) which is manifestly a prophecy of him; and who elsewhere is called the most Mighty, the Almighty, (Ps. 45:3; Rev. 1:8) and "over all" God blessed for ever", (Rom. 9:5) over all creatures, angels and men, who are made by him; and he is blessed for ever in himself. He is called "the great God", whose glorious appearing, and not the Father's, saints are directed to look for; besides, this great God, is explained of Jesus Christ our Saviour in the next clause, Titus 2:13: compare with this Revelation 19:17 where he who is called the great God, is the mighty warrior, whose name is the Word of God, and King of kings, and Lord of lords, (Rev. 19:11, 13, 16) Christ is also said to be the "living God", (Heb. 3:12) for he only is spoken of in the context; and this is only said of the most high God; which distinguishes him from all other deities, (Jer. 10:10) and, to add no more, he is called, "the true God", in opposition to all false and fictitious deities, (1 John 5:20) for what is there said, is said expressly of the Son of God.

Secondly, The Deity of Christ may be proved from the divine perfections he is possessed of; "for in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead", (Col. 2:9) not one perfection of the divine nature excepted; or otherwise it could not be said, that all the fulness of Deity was in him. God is necessarily and self-existent, and independent on any; such is Christ, he is amoGsoc;, God of himself: as man and mediator he has a life given him for himself, and others, and lives by the Father; but, as God, he owes his life and being to none; it is not derived from another; he is over all, God blessed for ever. Eternity is a perfection of God; God is from

everlasting to everlasting; Christ was not only before Abraham, but before Adam; and before any creature was in being; for he is the ap%r|, the beginning, the first Cause of the creation of God, (Rev. 3:14) the first born, or rather, the first parent and producer of every creature; as the word rcpcoTOTOKOc;, by the removal of the accent, may be rendered which best agrees with the apostle's reasoning in the next verse; where all things are said to be created by him; and therefore, as the apostle argues, he must be before all things, (Col. 1:15-17) as Mediator, he was set up from everlasting; his goings forth in the covenant were of old; the elect were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and had grace given them in him, before that began; all which suppose his eternal existence. Hence he is called Alpha and Omega the first and the last, the beginning and the ending; which is, and was, and is to come; Melchizedek's antitype, having neither beginning of days nor end of life (Rev. 1:8; Heb. 7:3). Omnipresence, or immensity, is another perfection of Deity, (Jer. 23:23, 24). Christ, as the Son of God, was in heaven, in the bosom of his Father; when, as the Son of man, he was here on earth, (John 1:18, 3:13) which he could not be, if he was not omnipresent; nor could he make good his promises to his ministers, churches, and people, to be with them at all times, in all ages, and in all places, wherever they are, (Matthew 18:20, 28:20) nor walk in the midst of his golden candlesticks, the several churches, in different places; and fill all things and persons in them, as he certainly does, (Rev. 1:13; Eph 4:10). Omniscience is another divine perfection, and most manifestly appears in Christ; he knew what was in man, and needed not that any should testify to him what was in man; he could tell the woman of Samaria all that ever she did; he knew from the beginning who would believe in him, and who would betray him; he knew the secret thoughts of the Scribes and Pharisees; and is that Word that is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; and he will hereafter let all the world and churches know, that he searches the hearts and reins. In short, he knows all things, as Peter affirmed unto him, (John 2:24, 25, 4:29, 6:64; Matthew 9:4; Heb. 4:12; Rev. 2:23; John 21:17) and though he is said not to know the day of judgment, this is said of him as the Son of man, not as the Son of God (Mark 13:32). Omnipotence is a perfection that belongs to Christ, and is peculiar to God, who only can do all things; Christ is almighty, and his works declare it; the creation of all things, the sustentation of the universe, the redemption and preservation of his people, and the resurrection of them at the last day; all which are, "according to his mighty power, which is able to subdue all things to himself" (Phil. 3:21). To observe no more, immutability belongs solely to God; who is without any variableness or shadow of turning; and such is Christ, the same today, yesterday, and for ever, (Heb. 13:8; see Ps. 102:26 compared with Heb. 1:12) and since therefore such perfections of the Godhead are in Christ, he must be truly and properly God. 3.

Thirdly, The truth of Christ's proper divinity may be proved from the works done by him; which are the same that are done by the Father; and in which he is a coefficient cause with him; and are done by him opoicoc;, in like manner as by the Father, (John 5:17, 19) such as the creation of all things out of nothing; of the whole world and all things in it, visible or invisible, (John 1:2, 3; Col. 1:16) the making of the worlds, the heaven and the earth, are particularly ascribed to the Word and Son of God; and he that built all things is God, (Heb. 11:3, 1:10, 3:4) the work of providence, the government of the world, and the disposing of all things in it, Christ is jointly concerned in with the Father; "My Father worketh hitherto; and I work", that is, with him (John 5:17). Christ upholds all things by his power; bears up the pillars of the earth; and by him do all things consist, (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17) the miracles Christ wrought on earth in human nature, as they were proofs of his Messiahship, so of his Deity; such as curing the lame, the blind, and dumb, and deaf, and even raising the dead, by a word speaking; which were what none but God could do: these prove that the Father was in him, and he in the Father, (Matthew 11:4, 5; John 10:37, 38). If he was not the mighty God, he could never have been able to have wrought and obtained the redemption and salvation of his people, by his own arm: what gave virtue and efficacy to his blood, to purchase his church and people, and cleanse them from their sins, is his Deity; and so to his righteousness, to make it a justifying one before God; and to his sacrifice, to make it expiatory of sin,

and acceptable to God. The acts of forgiveness of sin, and justification from it, are peculiar to God. None can forgive sin but God; yet Christ has done it, and therefore must be God, (Mark 2:7, 9, 10) it is God that justifies men from sin, and acquits them from condemnation, (Rom. 8:1, 33) and so does Christ (Isa. 53:11). The Resurrection of the dead is a work of almighty power, and which none but God can do; and yet Christ has raised himself from the dead, and thereby is declared to be the Son of God with power; that is, truly and properly God, (Rom. 1:4; John 2:19, 10:18) and he will raise all the dead at the last day, by his mighty power; and at his all commanding voice, the dead will come forth out of their graves, wherein they have lain, (John 5:28, 29; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17). The judgment of the world is committed to him; "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22). Now if he was not God omnipotent and omniscient he would never be able to do what he will do; gather all nations before him, separate them, and place them some on his right hand, and some on his left; bring to light the counsels of the heart, and judge the secrets of it, and give to every man for the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil; pronounce the several decisive sentences, and put them in execution, (Matthew 25: 31-46; Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Fourthly, As a further proof of the Deity of Christ, the worship given him both by angels and men may be observed; for when he, God's firstborn, was brought into the world, he said, "Let all the angels of God worship him", (Heb. 1:6) which order to the celestial inhabitants, would never have been given, if he was not God: it is also the declared will of the divine Father of Christ, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father"; that is, worship him with the same divine worship; which he would never have declared, who will not give his glory to another besides himself, was not Christ his Son the one God with him (see Ps. 2:12). Men are directed to exercise faith and hope on him; yea, Christ himself directs unto it, equally to be exercised on him, as on his Father; which he would never have done, but that he and his Father are one, one in nature, and so in power and glory, (John 14:1, 10:30) yea, if he was not God, but a mere man, instead of men being blessed and happy, who make him their hope, and trust in him, they would be cursed for so doing (Jer. 17:5, 7). Baptism, a solemn ordinance of religious worship, is ordered to be administered in his name, equally as in the name of the Father, (Matthew 28:19) which, if a mere creature, would be idolatry and blasphemy; for which reason the apostle Paul was so cautious, lest any should think they were baptized by him in his own name (1 Cor. 1:13-15). Prayer, another branch of religious worship, is often made to Christ; and that not by a single person only, as by Stephen, in his last moments, (Acts 7:59) but by whole churches and communities; who are said in every place to call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord; and how often are grace and peace wished for, by the apostles, as from God our Father, so from the Lord Jesus Christ? (1 Cor. 1:2, 3) all which would never be performed by saints, nor be admitted of by God, was not Christ truly and properly God; nor need we scruple to worship him, nor be fearful lest we should give him too much: and great encouragement we have to commit our souls, and the salvation of them into his hands, and trust him with our all; since he is God the only Saviour.

Chapter 31

OF THE DISTINCT PERSONALITY, AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

What only remains now to be considered, under the article of the Trinity, are the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost; to prove that he is a Person, a distinct Person, from the Father and Son; and a divine Person, or truly and properly God.

First, That he is a Person, and not a mere name and character, power or attribute of God; which will appear by observing,

I. That the description of a Person agrees with him; that it subsists and lives of itself, is endowed with will and understanding, or is a willing and intelligent agent. Such is the Spirit of God; as the Father has life in himself, and the Son has life in himself, so has the Holy Spirit; since he is the author of natural and spiritual life in men; which he preserves unto eternal life; and therefore called, the Spirit of life; which he could not be, unless he had life in himself; and if he has life in himself, he must subsist of himself: he has a power of willing whatever he pleases: the apostle, speaking of

his influences, administrations, and operations, says, "All these worketh the one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will", (1 Cor. 12:11) and that he is an intelligent agent, is clear from his knowing the things of God which none can know but him; and from his teaching men all things, and guiding them into all truth, and giving the spirit of wisdom and knowledge to one and another; now "he that teacheth men knowledge, shall not he know?" (1 Cor. 2:11, 12:8; John 14:26 16:13; Ps. 94:10).

2. Personal actions are ascribed unto him; he is said to be a reprover and convincer of men; to reprove or convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). Now he that convinces another of his mistakes, brings him to a sense and acknowledgment of them, and to repentance for them, must be a Person, and not a mere name and character. He is spoken of as a teacher, that teaches all things, all doctrines necessary to salvation, and all the duties of religion: an human teacher is a person, and much more a divine one, (John 14:26; 1 John 2:27) he is promised as a Comforter, (John 16:7) and which he answers to, by shedding abroad the love of God in the hearts of the Lord's people; by taking the things of Christ, and showing them to them; by applying to them exceeding great and precious promises; by declaring to them the pardon of their sins; by pronouncing the sentence of justification in their consciences; and by being the earnest and seal of their future happiness; all which are personal actions: he is one of the three witnesses in heaven, (1 John 5:7) who particularly testifies of Christ, of his Deity, sonship, offices, and grace, (John 15:26) and bears witness to the spirits of saints, that they are the children of God, (Rom. 8:16) which a mere name and character could not do; but a person. He is represented not only as a Spirit of grace and supplication, and an helper of the infirmities of the saints in prayer, but as making intercession for them, according to the will of God (Zech. 12:10; Rom. 8:26, 27). Now as the advocacy and intercession of Christ, prove him to be a Person, and a distinct one from the Father, with whom he intercedes; so the intercession of the Spirit, equally proves his personality, even his distinct personality also: to which may be added, that the Spirit is the giver of gifts to men, whereby they are qualified for the work of the ministry, (1 Cor. 12:8-11) and he calls them to that work, and appoints and sets them as overseers of particular churches, to feed them with knowledge and understanding, (Acts 13:2, 20:28) and, to observe no more, he is often described as an inhabitant in the saints, that dwells in their bodies, and in their souls, and will always abide in them, until he has wrought them up for that self-same thing, eternal glory and happiness; now to dwell with any person, or in any place, is a personal action, and describes a person, (John 14:16, 17; 1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19; Rom. 8:9, 11).

3. Personal affections are ascribed to the Spirit; as love, grief, &c. we read of the love of the Spirit, as well as of the Father, and of the Son; and which appears in the regeneration and sanctification of men, and in the application of grace unto them, (Rom. 15:30) and of the Spirit's being grieved with the sins of God's people, and their unbecoming behavior towards God and one another, (Eph. 4:30) and of his being rebelled against, vexed, and provoked; as he was by the Israelites (Isa. 63:10). All which could not be said of him, was he not a person. He is, moreover, said to be lied unto; as by Ananias and Sapphira, (Acts 5:3) and to be blasphemed, and sinned against with an unpardonable sin, (Matthew 12:32, 33) which could never be, nor with propriety be said, was he not a Person, and a divine Person too.

Secondly, The Holy Spirit is not only a Person, but a distinct Person from the Father and the Son; and besides his distinctive relative property, spiration, or being the breath of them both, and so distinct from each; the following things may be observed:

1. His procession from the Father and the Son: of his procession from the Father express mention is made in (John 15:26) and therefore must be distinct from the Father, from whom he proceeds; which, whether it respects his nature or his office, proves the same: it was once a warm controversy between the Greek and Latin churches, whether the Spirit proceeded from the Son or from the Father; which was denied by the former, and asserted by the latter; and which seems most correct; since he is called the Spirit of the Son, (Gal. 4:6) however, since he is the Spirit of the Son, he must be distinct from him whose Spirit he is.

2. The mission of the Holy Spirit, by the Father and the Son, clearly evinces his distinct personality from

them; of his being sent by the Father, see (John 14:16, 26) and of his being sent by the Son (see John 15:26, 16:7). Now as a mere name and character, quality, power, and attribute, could not be said to be sent, but a Person; so the Spirit that is sent, must be a distinct Person from the Father and Son, said to send him.

3. The Holy Spirit is called another Comforter, (John 14:16) the Father of Christ is one; he is the God of all comfort; that comforts his people in all their tribulations, (2 Cor. 1:3, 4) and Jesus Christ is also a Comforter; one of his names with the Jews is Menachem, a Comforter; a name well known with the Jews: hence good old Simeon is said to be waiting for the "Consolation of Israel", (Luke 2:25) that is, for the Messiah; whom the Jews expected as a Comforter: and now the Holy Ghost is another Comforter, distinct from both; from the Son, who prayed for him as such; and from the Father, prayed unto on that account.

4. The Holy Spirit is represented as doing some things distinct from the Father and the Son; particularly, as directing into the love of God, that is, the Father; and into a patient waiting for Christ; and so is distinguished from them both, (2 Thess. 3:5) and also as taking of the things of Christ, called likewise the things of the Father, and showing them to them that are Christ's; in which also he is distinguished from the Father, and from Christ, whose things he takes and shows (John 16:14, 15). Song regeneration, renovation, sanctification, and conversion, are distinct things, and very peculiar to the Spirit.

5. There are some distinct appearances of the Spirit, which show his distinct personality; as at the baptism of Christ, when he descended as a dove and lighted on him; and thereby was distinguished from the Father, whose voice was heard from heaven; and from the Son, who was baptized in Jordan, and on whom the Spirit lighted, (Matthew 3:16,17) and on the day of Pentecost the Spirit descended on the apostles, in the form of cloven tongues, as of fire; and with respect to this the apostle Peter says, that Christ "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear"; meaning the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and his extraordinary gifts; and who is plainly distinguished from the Father, who made promise of him, and from the Son, who received this promise, and shed his gifts in the manner he did.

6. The Holy Spirit is represented as a distinct person in the ordinance of baptism; and the form of it being to be administered in his name, as distinct from the name of the Father and of the Son, in whose name also it was to be administered, (Matthew 28:19) and so he is mentioned as a distinct witness from the Father and the Word, in the record bore in heaven; for if he is not a distinct person from them, there could not be three testifiers, or three that bore record in heaven (1 John 5:7).

Thirdly, The Holy Ghost is not only a person, and a distinct person from the Father and Son, but a divine person, or truly and properly God; which was denied by the Macedonians of old, and by the Socinians of late; and generally by all that oppose the divinity of Christ: but the Deity of the Spirit is to be proved by the same mediums and arguments which are to be fetched from the same sources as the Deity of the Son. And,

1. From the names which are given unto him; as particularly the name Jehovah, peculiar to the most High; it was Jehovah, the Lord God of Israel, that spake by the mouth of all the holy prophets from the beginning of the world; and it is certain that they spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, (Luke 1:68, 70; 2 Peter 1:21) it was Jehovah, the Rock and God of Israel, that spake by David; and it is clear that it was the Holy Ghost that spake by him; for so Peter says, "This scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spoke before concerning Judas", (2 Sam. 23:2, 3; Acts 1:16) it was Jehovah, the Lord God, whom the Israelites tempted, proved, and provoked in the wilderness; and this the Holy Ghost speaks of as done to himself; "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, proved me", me, the Holy Ghost, (Ps. 95:6, 7; Heb. 3:7-9; see Isa. 63:10) it was Jehovah that said to Isaiah, "Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed", &c. and according to the apostle Paul, the same was the Holy Ghost; for to the Jews he says, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Go unto this people, and say, hearing ye shall hear", &c. (Isa. 6:8, 9;

Acts 28:25, 26). The Greek word Kupioc;, used in the New Testament, answers to Jehovah and Adonai in the Old; and this is said of the Holy Spirit, he is that Spirit which is the Lord, and is called the Lord the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17, 18; see also 2 Thess. 3:5). Moreover the Holy Spirit is very plainly called God in scripture: when Ananias lied to the Holy Ghost, he is said to lie not unto men but unto God; wherefore if lying to the Holy Ghost is lying to God, it follows that the Holy Ghost must be God (Acts 5:3, 4). The saints of God are called the temple of God, and the reason proving it is, because the Spirit of God dwells in them, and because their bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, they are exhorted to glorify God in their bodies: Now if the Holy Ghost is not called God, or meant by God in these passages, there is no force of reasoning in them (1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19, 20). Moreover the apostle gives to the Holy Ghost the divine names of Spirit, Lord, and God, when he is speaking of the diversities of his gifts, administrations, and operations; for of him only is he speaking by whom all these are (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

2. The Deity of the Spirit may be proved from the perfections of God, which are manifestly in him, as eternity; hence, as some think, he is called the eternal Spirit, (Heb. 9:14) however he was present at the creation of the heavens and the earth, and was concerned therein, (Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13) and therefore must be before any creature was, before time was, and so from eternity; as God the Father never was without his Son, so never without his Spirit; when it is said in some places that the Spirit was not yet, and that there were some that had not heard that there was any Holy Ghost; this is to be understood of the wonderful effusion of the gifts of the Holy Spirit on the apostles at Pentecost, which was not to be until after the glorification of Christ; and of which dispensation the disciples at Ephesus had not then heard (John 7:39; Acts 19:2). Omnipresence, or immensity, another divine perfection, is ascribed to the Spirit; says David, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? and whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (Ps. 139:7) he is not to be shunned and avoided; there is no going any where from him, for he is every where, otherwise he might be avoided; and if every where, he must be the omnipresent God: the saints are his temples in which he dwells, and he dwells in them all, at all times, in all places; which he could not do if he was not immense and omnipresent. Omniscience is another divine perfection to be observed in the Spirit of God; he knows all things, even the deep things of God, the thoughts, counsels, and purposes of his heart; which he could not know, if he was not the omniscient God (1 Cor. 2:10, 11) nor could he teach the saints all things, nor guide them into all truth, and much less show things to come, (John 14:26, 16:13) as he did under the Old Testament, when he testified beforehand, by the prophets, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, (1 Peter 1:11) and under the New Testament, witnessing to the apostle Paul that bonds and afflictions should abide him in every city, which he found to be true; and foretelling, by Agabus, that there would be a great dearth throughout the world, which came to pass in the times of Claudius Caesar (Acts 20:23, 11:28). Omnipotence is predicated of him; he is called the power of the Highest, and the finger of God; his concern in creation, and in the formation of the human nature of Christ, the miraculous signs and wonders wrought by his power, the gifts that he bestows, and the grace that he works in the hearts of men, loudly proclaim his omnipotence; and if such perfections, which are peculiar to Deity, are to be found in him, he must be truly and properly God.

3. The works which are ascribed unto him are a clear and full proof of his divinity: creation, a work of divine power, is attributed to him; he not only moved upon the face of the waters that covered the earth, at the first creation, and brought the rude and unformed chaos into a beautiful order, and garnished the heavens, and bespangled them with the luminaries and stars of light; but by him, the Breath, or Spirit of the Lord, the heavens and the host thereof were made and established, (Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; Ps. 33:6) yea man, the most excellent and curious part of the creation, is made by him, as Elihu owns, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4). The work of providence he is jointly concerned in with the Father and the Son; "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? with whom took he counsel (the Spirit of the Lord) and taught him in the path of judgment? and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" (Isa. 40:13,

14) that is, how to govern the world, and manage and direct all affairs in it. The editing of the scripture is of him; "All scripture is given by inspiration of God"; by the Breath or Spirit of God, (2 Tim. 3:16) this is a work purely divine, and is of the Spirit; "holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). It was the Holy Spirit that formed the human nature of Christ; what was conceived in the Virgin was of the Holy Ghost; that was fearfully and wonderfully made by him, and curiously wrought by him, in the lowest parts of the earth, (Matthew 1:20; Ps. 139:14, 15) and was richly anointed by him with his gifts and graces; even above his fellows, and without measure, (Ps. 45:7; Isa. 61:1; John 3:34) and the miracles of Christ were by him, the finger of God; and those which the apostles wrought for the confirmation of the gospel, were by the power of the Holy Ghost, (Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20; Rom. 15:19; Heb. 2:3, 4) the work of grace in the heart is his work; regeneration and renovation are of the Holy Ghost; sanctification is called the sanctification of the Spirit; this is not by might nor power of man, but by the Spirit of God; and in which there is such a display of the exceeding greatness of divine power, as is equal to that which was exerted in raising Christ from the dead, (Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:2; Zech. 4:6; Eph. 1:19) yea, the resurrection of Christ himself from the dead, is attributed to the Spirit of holiness; and it is by him the Spirit which dwells in the saints, that God will quicken their mortal bodies (Rom. 1:4, 8:11). 3d. The worship which is due to the Spirit of God, and is given unto him, proves him to be God; for were he not, such worship would never be paid him; not only temples are erected by him, but for him, in which he is worshipped and glorified (Eph. 2:22; 1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19, 20). Baptism, a solemn act of religious worship, is administered in his name, as in the name of the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19). Swearing, which is another act of worship, a solemn appeal to the omniscient God, and is mentioned as a branch of serving him, (Deut. 6:13) is made by the Spirit, and he is called upon as a witness to facts (Rom. 9:1). And prayer, a very principal part of worship, is directed to him, sometimes singly, as in (2 Thess. 3:5; Song 4:16) and sometimes, in conjunction with the other divine Persons (Rev. 1:4, 5). All which prove him to be truly and properly God; and therefore we should be careful to give him the honour and glory due unto him, as to the Father and the Son; and as we trust the Son with the whole affair of our salvation, and trust in him for it; so we should trust the Spirit of God with the work of grace upon our souls; and be confident that he that has begun it, will perform it; since "it is God that works in us, to will and to do, of his good pleasure". My Treatise on the Trinity, was written near forty years ago, and when I was a young man; and had I now departed from some words and phrases then used by me, it need not, at such a distance of time, be wondered at: but so far from it, that upon a late revisal of it, I see no reason to retract anything I have written, either as to sense or expression; save only, in a passage or two of scripture, before observed, which then did not stand so clear in my mind, as proofs of the eternal generation of the Son of God; but, upon a more mature consideration of them, I am inclined to think otherwise, and have accordingly altered my sense of them; which alteration, as it is no ways inconsistent with the doctrine as before held by me, so it serves but the more strongly to confirm it.

APPENDIX ESCHATOLOGY

Greetings from the United Kingdom

I have a request and am asking those who have an understanding of eschatology to assist our students at Bierton Particular Baptists College in Pakistan. We have set them an assignment. Your response may be of help them.

I would like you to listen to the following sermon, on the text Jerehiah 6, 16, under the title subject The Scripture The Only Guide In Matters Of Faith, preached by Dr John Gill, in London at Barbican, 1750. He was Particular Baptist minister and Theologian in the 18 century.

We have asked our students to identify the eschatological views expressed by Dr Gill. and compare them with those James Stuart Russell's as expressed in his book ,The Parousia. In approximately 400 words.

Dr. John Gill expressed his views in his Body of Doctrinal Divinity which was written after his exposition of the while bible, in 1767. James Stuart Russell between (1816-1895) published the Paurosia.

A fuller view of fulfilled prophesy which is our recommended study is found in What happened in A.D. 70 by Ed. Stevens.

Please view our recommended reading text that are listed under FURTHER PUBLICATIONS.

If you could do the same that would be very helpful.

The sermon is an hour long but broken down into 5, 10 minutes, parts for ease of access and listening.

I am including a link to down a PDF copy of the sermon or view it as an html file if you are unable to listen to the read sermon.

David Clarke

Director of Bierton Particular Baptists.

ASSIGNMENT (ESCHATOLOGY)

1 Assignment Playlist (Youtube)

The Scriptures The Only Guide, Dr John Gill

2 Assignment Outline and Sermon (html)

The Scriptures The Only Guide JG 4.html

3 Frank Daniel's Answer (Youtube)

Frank Daniels (Rethinking Eschatology)
John Gill Eschatology and James Stuart Russell

Generally I would classify Dr. Gill as an Historicist. He refers to the Papacy as the "man of sin," as Historicists do. By "Historicist," I refer to the viewpoint favoured among some early Protestants that the events in Revelation have been unfolding throughout the centuries, but that those in chapter 20 have yet to occur.

Dr. Russell was a "Partial Preterist." They view the bulk of Revelation as relating to events happening during the First Revolt (AD 66-73).

In Revelation, and usually in Matthew 24, they place a large temporal gap between the events of the First Century and the end. Historicists hold to a number of smaller gaps, although they do not agree as to what historical events correspond to the visions in Revelation.

Dr. Gill has placed all of Mt. 24-25 in the First Century, but his Exposition of the Bible leaves no doubt of his certainty that the visions in Revelation 4ff. were fulfilled as history behind him unfolded -- even though ch. 20 is in the future.

Dr. Russell would agree that the events in Matthew took place in the First Century, and he regularly identifies the "second coming" as taking place then. With no gap in Matthew, he disagrees with some modern Partial Preterists. However, Russell views Revelation as they do: the events of the first nineteen chapters were for the first century, but Revelation 20 is still unfulfilled.

Together, Drs. Gill and Russell serve to illustrate part of the divide that occurred between Historicism and Preterism.

Victorinus (c. 300) was both, placing most events in the past and having a somewhat continuous history until the future of Revelation 20 – which he believed was immediate.

By the sixth century, there were those who regarded the prophecies about the "later days" as referring both to the destruction of the temple and to a time in the future.

Historicism as we know it today began in the Tenth Century, with Arnulf of Rheims accusing their popes of being antichrists. In response to the Historicist movement, Francisco Ribera wrote a

commentary placing most of Revelation in the future, and Luis Alcasar wrote one placing it in the past, concluding with the early Fourth Century; Henry Hammond agreed. Thomas Hayne (1645) believed that the Millennium had ended. It was, then, at the start of the Seventeenth Century, that the Preterist viewpoints (Full and Partial) diverged from the Historicist.

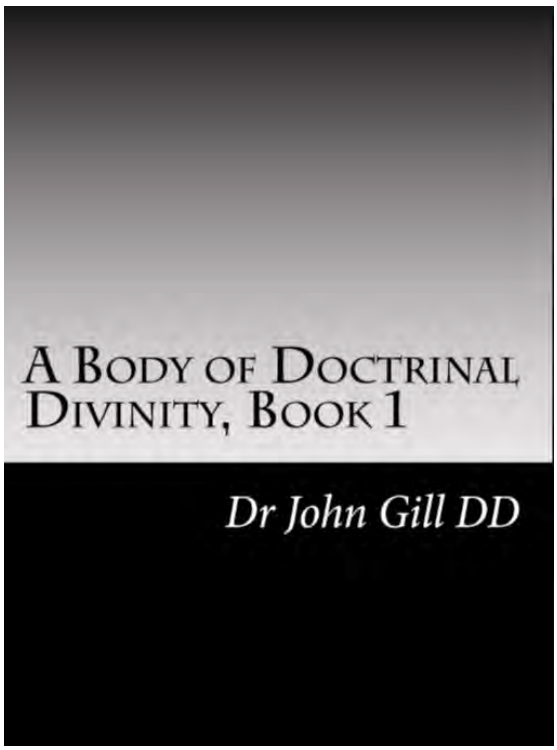
We thank Frank Daniels for his very good response, correct and full answer.

David Clarke
22nd September 2017

John Gill expressed his views in his Body of Doctrinal Divinity which was written after his exposition go the while bible in 1767. James Stuart Russell publisher the Paurosia.

A fuller view of fulfilled prophesy which is our recommended study is found in What happened in A.D. 70 by Ed. Stevens.

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY BOOK 1



A System of Practical Truths

THIS IS BOOK 1 Treating The Subjects:
Of God, His Works, Names, Nature, Perfections And Persons. And Contains:

CONTENTS OF BOOk'S I,II,III,IV,V,VI and VII

Book I
Of God, His Word, Names, Nature, Perfections, And Persons

Chapter 1
Of The Being Of God
Chapter 2
Of The Holy Scriptures
Chapter 3
Of The Names Of God
Chapter 4
Of The Nature Of God
Chapter 5
Of The Attributes Of God In General, And Of His Immutability In Particular.
Chapter 6
Of The Infinity Of God,
Chapter 7
Of The Life Of God.
Chapter 8
Of The Omnipotence Of God.
Chapter 9
Of The Omniscience Of God
Chapter 10
Of The Wisdom Of God

Chapter 11
Of The Will Of God And The Sovereignty Of It
Chapter 12
Of The Love Of God
Chapter 13
Of The Grace Of God
Chapter 14
Of The Mercy Of God
Chapter 15
Of The Longsuffering Of God.
Chapter 16
Of The Goodness Of God.
Chapter 17
Of The Anger And Wrath Of God.
Chapter 18
Of The Hatred Of God.
Chapter 19
Of The Joy Of God.
Chapter 20
Of The Holiness Of God.
Chapter 21
Of The Justice Or Righteousness Of God
Chapter 22
Of The Veracity Of God
Chapter 23
Of The Faithfulness Of God
Chapter 24
Of The Sufficiency And
Perfection Of God
Chapter 25
Of The Blessedness Of God.
Chapter 26
Of The Unity Of God
Chapter 27
Of A Plurality In The Godhead Or, A Trinity Of Persons In The Unity Of The Divine Essence

Chapter 28
Of The Personal Relations; Or, Relative Properties Which Distinguish The Three Divine Persons In The Deity.
Chapter 29
Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Father.
Chapter 30
Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Son.
Chapter 31
Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Holy Spirit.

Book II
Of The Acts Of God

Chapter 1
Of The Internal Acts And Works Of God; And Of His Decrees In General
Chapter 2
Of The Special Decrees Of God, Relating To Rational Creatures, Angels, And Men; And Particularly Of Election.
Chapter 3
Of The Decree Of Rejection, Of Some Angels, And Of Some Men.
Chapter 4
Of The Eternal Union Of The Elect Of God Unto Him
Chapter 5
Of Other Eternal And Immanent Acts In God, Particularly Adoption And Justification.
Chapter 6
Of The Everlasting Council Between The Three Divine Persons, Concerning The Salvation Of Men.
Chapter 7
Of The Everlasting Covenant Of Grace, Between The Father, And The Son, And The Holy Spirit.
Chapter 8
Of The Part Which The Father Takes In The Covenant.
Chapter 9
Of The Part The Son Of God, The Second Person, Has Taken In The Covenant.
Chapter 10
Of Christ, As The Covenant Head Of The Elect
Chapter 11
Of Christ, The Mediator Of The Covenant
Chapter 12
Of Christ, The Surety Of The Covenant.
Chapter 13
Of Christ, The Testator Of The Covenant.
Chapter 14
Of The Concern The Spirit Of God Has In The Covenant Of Grace.
Chapter 15
Of The Properties Of The Covenant Of Grace
Chapter 16
Of The Complacency And Delight God Had In Himself, And The Divine Persons In Each Other, Before Any Creature Was Brought Into Being

Book III
Of The External Works Of God

Chapter 1

Of Creation In General
Chapter 2
Of The Creation Of Angels
Chapter 3
Of The Creation Of Man
Chapter 4
Of The Providence Of God
Chapter 5
Of The Confirmation Of The Elect Angels, And The Fall Of The Non-Elect.
Chapter 6
Of The Honour And Happiness Of Man In A State Of Innocence.
Chapter 7
Of The Law Given To Adam, And The Covenant Made With Him In His State Of Innocence; In Which He Was The Federal Head And Representative Of His Posterity.
Chapter 8
Of The Sin And Fall Of Our First Parents.
Chapter 9
Of The Nature, Aggravations, And Sad Effects Of The Sin Of Man.
Chapter 10
Of The Imputation Of Adam's Sin To All His Posterity
Chapter 11
Of The Of The Corruption Of Human Nature.
Chapter 12
Of Actual Sins And Transgressions.
Chapter 13
Of The Punishment Of Sin

Book IV

Of The Acts Of The Grace Of God Towards And Upon His Elect In Time

Chapter 1
Of The Manifestation And Administration Of The Covenant Of Grace
Chapter 2
Of The Exhibitions Of The Covenant Of Grace In The Patriarchal State
Chapter 3
Of The Exhibitions Of The Covenant Of Grace Under The Mosaic Dispensation
Chapter 4
Of The Covenant Of Grace, As Exhibited In The Times Of David, And The Succeeding Prophets, To The Coming Of Christ
Chapter 5
Of The Abrogation Of The Old Covenant, Or First Administration Of It, And The Introduction Of The New, Or Second Administration Of It.
Chapter 6
Of The Law Of God
Chapter 7
Of The Gospel

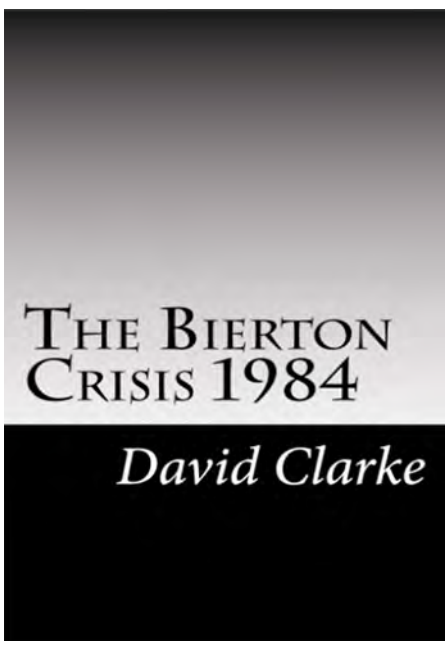
Book V

Of The Grace Of Christ In His State Of Humiliation And Exaltation, And In The Offices Exercised By Him In Them

Chapter 1
Of The Incarnation Of Christ
Chapter 2
Of Christ's State Of Humiliation
Chapter 3
Of The Active Obedience Of Christ In His State Of Humiliation
Chapter 4
Of The Passive Obedience Of Christ, Or Of His Sufferings And Death
Chapter 5
Of The Burial Of Christ
Chapter 6
Of The Resurrection Of Christ From The Dead.
Chapter 7
Of The Ascension Of Christ To Heaven
Chapter 8
Of The Session Of Christ At The Right Hand Of God
Chapter 9
Of The Prophetic Office Of Christ
Chapter 10
Of The Priestly Office Of Christ
Chapter 11
Of The Intercession Of Christ
Chapter 12
Of Christ's Blessing His People As A Priest
Chapter 13
Of The Kingly Office Of Christ
Chapter 14
Of The Spiritual Reign Of Christ

Book VI
Of The Blessings Of Grace, And The Doctrines Of It
Chapter 1
Of Redemption By Christ
Chapter 2
Of The Causes Of Redemption By Christ
Chapter 3
Of The Objects Of Redemption By Christ
Chapter 4
Of Those Texts Of Scripture Which Seem To Favour Universal Redemption
Chapter 5
Of The Satisfaction Of Christ
Chapter 6
Of Propitiation, Atonement, And Reconciliation, As Ascribed To Christ
Chapter 7
Of The Pardon Of Sin
Chapter 8
Of Justification
Chapter 9
Of Adoption
Chapter 10
Of The Liberty Of The Sons Of God
Chapter 11
Of Regeneration
Chapter 12
Of Effectual Calling
Chapter 13
Of Conversion
Chapter 14
Of Sanctification
Chapter 15
Of The Perseverance Of The Saints
Book VII
Of The Final State Of Men
Chapter 1
Of The Death Of The Body
Chapter 2
Of The Immortality Of The Soul
Chapter 3
Of The Separate State Of The Soul Until The Resurrection,And Its Employment In That State
Chapter 4
Of The Resurrection Of The Body
Chapter 5
Of The Second Coming Of Christ, And His Personal Appearance
Chapter 6
Of The Conflagration Of The Universe
Chapter 7
Of The New Heavens And Earth, And The Inhabitants Of Them.
Chapter 8
Of The Millennium Or Personal Reign Of Christ With The Saints On The New Earth A Thousand Years
Chapter 9
Of The Last And General Judgment
Chapter 10
Of The Final State Of The Wicked In Hell
Chapter 11
Of The Final State Of The Saints In Heaven

THE BIERTON CRISIS



The Bierton Crisis is the personal story of David Clarke a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church. He was also the church secretary and minister sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982.

The Bierton Church was formed in 1832 and was

a Gospel Standard cause who's rules of membership are such that only the church can terminate ones membership.

This tells of a crisis that took place in the church in 1984, which led to some members withdrawing support. David, the author, was one of the members who withdrew but the church did not terminate his membership as they wished him return.

This story tells in detail about those errors in doctrine and practices that had crept into the Bierton church and of the lengths taken to put matters right. David maintained and taught Particular Redemption and that the gospel was the rule of life for the believer and not the law of Moses as some church members maintained.

This story tells of the closure of the Bierton chapel when David was on mission work in the Philippines in December 2002 and when the remaining church members died. It tells how David was encouraged by the church overseer to return to Bierton and re-open the chapel.

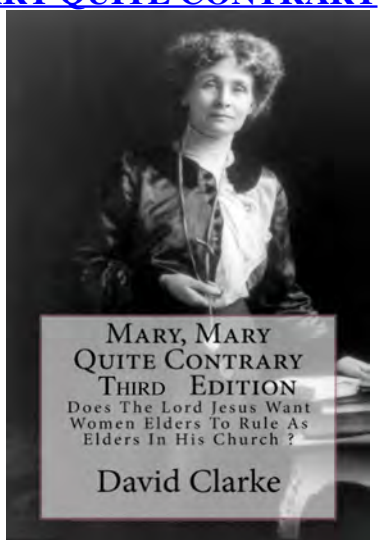
On David's return to the UK he learned a newly unelected set of trustees had take over the responsibility for the chapel and were seeking to sell it. The story tells how he was refused permission to re open or use the chapel and they sold it as a domestic dwelling, in 2006.

These trustees held doctrinal views that opposed the Bierton church and they denied David's continued membership of the church in order to lay claim too and sell the chapel, using the money from the sale of the chapel for their own purposes.

David hopes that his testimony will promote the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, as set out in the doctrines of grace, especially Particular Redemption and the rule of life for the believer being the gospel of Christ, the royal law of liberty, and not the law of Moses as some reformed Calvinists teach, will be realized by the reader.

His desire is that any who are called to preach the gospel should examine their own standing and ensure that they can derive from scripture the doctrines and practices they teach and advance and that they can derived the truths they teach from scripture alone and not from the traditions of men or their opinions however well they may be thought of.

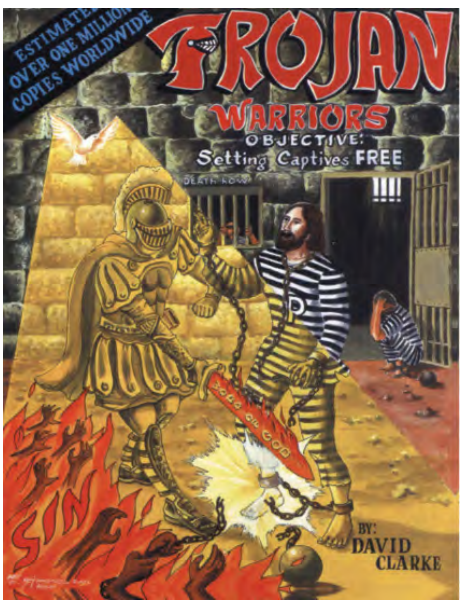
MARY MARY QUITE CONTRARY



By David Clarke

When treating the subject of women elders in the church we are not dealing with the affairs of a secular society and so it has nothing to do with women's rights, equality of sex or race in the world. This matter only relates to men and women in a Christian church. It is about the rules of the house of God, which is the church of the living God and rules for those who are members of the body of Christ and members of an heavenly county. The Suffragettes Emmeline Pankhurst 1858 -1928) was a Suffragette and worked very hard to bring equal rights for women to vote as men. In the year of her death all women over 21 gained the right to vote. The Suffragette movement brought about many changes for the better in a secular society but not so for women seeking to follow Christian principles. One of her famous quotes was, "Trust in God She shall provide". Terms which do not reflect Christian beliefs. We know God will provide and He is not a she. In the USA and the UK, women's political rights were brought into general political consciousness by the suffragettes and since then there have been legal rights granted to the Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups, same sex marriages, along with the development of the feminist movement and the appointment of persons from the LBGT community to responsible positions in the Church of England. All of this has caused conflict in the Christian community due to differences beliefs of right and wrong. This book seeks to show what the bible has to say about the role of women in the church and family. Since these rules are taught by the Apostles of Christ they are the word of God to us and we should obey. The secular world may differ and turn from the narrow path taught in scripture but we should follow the word of God, this is our wisdom.

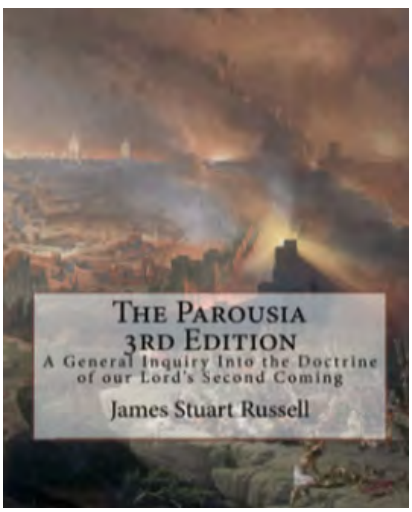
TROJAN WARRIORS



Setting Captives Free. Trojan Warriors is a true story of two brothers, Michael and David Clarke, who are brought up in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England. They became criminals in the 60's and were sent to prison for malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license, in 1967. They both turned from their lives of crimes in remarkable ways but some 25 years apart, and then they worked together helping other prison inmates, on their own roads of reformation. David the younger brother became a Christian, after a bad experience on LSD, in 1970, and then went on to educate himself and then on to Higher Education. He became a baptist minister and taught electronics for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education. Michael however remained untouched and continued his flamboyant life style ending up serving a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996, where he died of tuberculosis in 2005. When David heard the news of his brothers arrest on an ITN television news bulletin he felt compelled to wrote their story. And then when he heard of his own brothers

conversion from crime to Christ, after serving 5 year of his sentence, he published their story in his book, "Converted on LS Trip", and directed a mission of help to the Philippines to assist his brother. This book tells the story of this mission. They then worked together with many former notorious criminals, who were inmates in New Bilibid Prison, who too had become Christians and turned their lives around. This help was to train them to become preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ . This book contains the 66 testimonies of some of these men who convicted former criminals, incarcerated in New Bilibid Prison. They are the, "Trojan Warriors", who had turned their lives around and from crime to Christ. Twenty two of these testimonies are men who are on Death Row scheduled to be executed by lethal injection. Revelation 12 verse 11: And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto the death.

THE PAROUSIA



James Stuart Russell

Foreword By Ed Stevens

The word "Parousia" (par-oo-see-ah) is not a household word, but students of endtime prophecy know it is a reference to the Second Coming of Christ. It comes from two Greek words ("para" beside, and "ousia" state of being) and literally means "to be beside" (present with someone). It came to be a more specific reference to important people coming for an extended (but not long-term) visit to one of their subject territories (a "visitation"). It can refer either to the initial arrival or the afterward presence. It is used in the New Testament almost exclusively of Christ's Second Coming.

Russell examines every significant New Testament text about Christ's return, to see when it would occur and what it would be like. Since he believed the Second Coming occurred in the first century at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, his view is labeled "Preterist."

The word "Preterist" is another prophetic term with which many are unfamiliar. According to Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, a Preterist is "a theologian who believes the prophecies of the Apocalypse have already been fulfilled." A Preterist is the opposite of a Futurist. Futurists teach that the three major endtime events (parousia, resurrection, judgment) are still future in fulfillment, whereas Preterists teach these events have already been fulfilled. Some may wonder what difference it makes?

Everything crucial to Christianity is at risk. The Deity of Christ, the integrity of the apostles and prophets, and the inspiration of the New Testament is at stake. How so?

Jesus and the NT writers repeatedly make time-restricted predictions about His return and the other endtime events. They do not merely suggest that Christ's Parousia might occur in their lifetime, they unequivocally affirm it.

Liberals, skeptics, and Jewish/Islamic critics use those "time statements" to discredit Jesus and the New Testament. Inspired men cannot make mistakes. Since Jesus and the NT writers predicted Christ's return to occur in their lifetime, and it supposedly didn't happen, they assume Jesus and the NT writers were mistaken.

Indeed, if we cannot trust their prophetic utterances, we cannot trust anything else they say. Christianity is totally discredited if those predictions failed to materialize exactly as they prophesied.

You might wonder what these "time texts" are? Matthew 16:27-28 is a good example. This book deals with every one of them. They were not mistaken when they predicted Christ's return in their lifetime. It really occurred, at AD 70.

Theologians who study endtime prophecy consider Russell's book a classic defense of the Preterist view.

It is this book, more than any other during the past 125 years, which has moved so many toward Preterism.

Many in the Reformed faith (e.g., R. C. Sproul, Sr., David Chilton, Gary DeMar, Ken Gentry, Gary North, Jim Jordan, et al) credit Russell's book as having a significant impact on their eschatological views. R. C. Sproul, Sr. says he looks favorably at Preterism because it is the only view of prophecy which effectively counters the liberal-skeptic-critic attack. He has written much to recommend Russell's book and encourage the spread of Preterism, even though he does not go as far as Russell does. In his Foreword to the 1999 Baker Books reprint of The Parousia (pp. ix-x), Sproul says:

Russell's work is valuable chiefly for his analysis of the time-frame references of New Testament prophecy and his understanding of the main reference to the parousia. ...Russell's book has forced me to take the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem far more seriously than before, to open my eyes to the radical significance of this event in redemptive history. It vindicates the apostolic hope and prediction of our Lord's close-at hand coming in judgment.... I can never read the New Testament again the same way I read it before reading The Parousia.

Until this book appeared in 1878, Preterism had little systemization. This book began that process, and remains one of the most consistent and comprehensive explanations of Preterism available. The Preterist view flourished in Germany and Britain. But America, still recovering from civil war, took little notice. In global terms, its impact is still marginal, but it has seen significant growth in the past ten years, and the Internet is one of the big factors stimulating that. What the Gutenberg printing press did for the Protestant reformation, the Internet did for the Preterist reformation.

The Internet is the perfect place to publish helpful material like this. One of the first books to be posted on Preterist websites was Russell's Parousia. Even though the electronic version has had many readers in the short five years it has been available, it has not diminished demand for printed copies. This book is destined to remain a Preterist classic.

Russell did a remarkable job of interpretation compared to previous centuries. He pointed the way in a number of areas that we are only just now beginning to develop further. He devoted over 170 pages to the book of Revelation. One of his best statements is there. He uses the "time" statements in the first three verses of Revelation to show how crucial the date of writing is to the interpretation of the book:

It may truly be said that the key has all the while hung by the door, plainly visible to every one who had eyes to see; yet men have tried to pick the lock, or force the door, or climb up some other way, rather than avail themselves of so simple and ready a way of admission as to use the key made and provided for them. (Parousia, p. 367)

Russell leaves no excuses for Futurism. His survey of all the "Parousia" (second coming) references is a tour de force in Preterist exegesis. This book was the first wave of what has become a whole storm of books defending the AD 70 fulfillment of endtime prophecy.

Futurists and Partial Preterists for too long have hidden behind the excuse of wanting explicit "time indicators" before assigning a text to AD 70. Russell and modern Preterists have exhaustively shown that all NT endtime texts have first century "audience relevance" written all over them, which functions as an implicit time indicator. The New Testament was not written to us originally. We are reading someone else's mail. The primary task of a Bible interpreter is to discover what the original author intended to communicate to his original audience, not just to ask what it "could" mean to us today.

THREE DIFFICULT TEXTS SIMPLIFIED

There are three scriptures which most partial preterists think are yet to be fulfilled: Acts 1:11, 1 Cor. 15:20-57, and 1 Thess. 4:13-18. Russell shows that an AD 70 fulfillment is the most consistent interpretation of these texts. However, he does not deal very much with Acts 1:11. As a result, many Futurists and Partial Preterists have used this text to teach another major return of Christ still in the future. Modern Preterists have now shown that these three texts contain implicit time indicators and contextual clues which connect them inseparably to the Parousia and final consummation in AD 70. For a fuller explanation of these three texts from a Preterist perspective, see the three books written by this author (Stevens Response To Gentry, Questions 5 About The Afterlife, and

Expectations Demand A Rapture).

In those books, we deal especially with the typological imagery of Christ's ascension into the cloud- filled heavenly Holy of Holies to present His own blood to make final atonement, and His "second appearance" back out of the heavenly temple to announce atonement to His anxiously waiting saints. The Acts 1:11 reference to the return of Christ is easy to apply to AD 70 when we realize it is speaking of the reverse of the visible ascent of Christ in Theophany form. His descent would follow the same Theophany pattern as His ascent, meaning that it would be visible like His departure. He ascended visibly with clouds and angels in the presence of a few disciples, and the two angels (Acts 1:10-11) promised that He would descend visibly "in like manner" in that same Theophany pattern to only those disciples whom He wished to see it. Both the going away and the return were "cloud comings" (Theophanies) accompanied by angels. He left the same way He would return (in clouds with the angels) to appear to his anxiously waiting disciples ("How long, O Lord?" and "O, our Lord, come!"). They expected His return before all of that generation died. Some of them were promised to remain alive until His return, and that they would literally "see" it before they all died (Matt. 16:27-28 and John 21:22f).

Even some partial preterists (e.g. Kenneth Gentry in his book, Before Jerusalem Fell) have agreed that Rev. 1:7 (which mentions a "cloud coming" or Theophany which "every eye would see") was fulfilled in AD 70. Since most expositors connect Rev. 1:7 with Acts 1:11, it seems reasonable to assign both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11 to the visible Theophany that was seen by the Jewish people just before the war in AD 66. Notice what R. C. Sproul, Sr. said about the angelic appearances in the sky in AD 66 and its connection to Rev. 1:7 – "...theop Old Testament prophets, when speaking of a real historical visitation of God in judgment upon cities and nations, used exactly this kind of language in a metaphorical way to describe that coming of divine judgment.... As some 19th century scholars...Jonathan Edwards...B. B. Warfield and others have suggested, what Jesus is talking about here on the Mount of Olives [Matt. 24:3] ...is the end of the Jewish age. And that the coming that he's talking about, and that he's warning these contemporaries about over and over again... that was coming on that generation...was the judgment of God that was coming on Jerusalem and the temple in the year 70 AD.... Was Jesus visible? Did "every eye see him" [Rev. 1:7] and all of that? No. Although, one of the weirdest passages you ever read in ancient history is the paragraph that is found in Josephus [Wars, Bk 6, Ch 5, Sect. 3]. I quote it in my book [The Last Days According to Jesus, p. 124]... After talking about some remarkable, astonishing celestial events that some people had reported, he said, "Besides these a few days after that feast, on the one-and-twentieth day of the month Artemisius ...before the setting of the sun, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds...." ...The overwhelming testimony of the contemporaries (and he was there as an eyewitness) was that people did see something in the clouds. And what is it they saw? They saw chariots. Is that the first time the chariot throne of God is seen in the clouds over Palestine? What took Elijah to heaven? What were the whirling merkabahs [chariots] Ezekiel beheld? Was not the basic symbol in the Old Testament of the movable judgment throne of God, his chariots of fire? And here we have the testimony of many, many people saying they saw these chariots running about the clouds right before the end of Jerusalem. ...It lends credence to the further application of Jesus' predictions of what would come in this judgment of the nation of Israel and of the city of Jerusalem..." [R. C. Sproul, Sr. "Last Days Madness" speech, 1999 Ligonier Ministries National Conference in Orlando. Bracketed material inserted by the author of this Foreword.]

Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History, Bk 3, Ch 8, Section 5) quotes this same material from Josephus, and Tacitus (Histories, Book 5, "About The Jews") alludes to the same events. Sproul's comments stimulate several thoughts. If Rev. 1:7 was fulfilled by the appearance of angels and chariots in the sky at AD 66, and if Acts 1:11 is speaking of the same judgment coming (or cloud coming, Theophany) of Christ, then what text teaches a still future visible coming of Christ? If the angelic armies literally seen in the clouds at AD 66 were the fulfillment of "every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1:7) as Sproul has allowed

as a possibility, then it was also the fulfillment of Acts 1:11! In Matt 16:27-28, which R. C. Sproul, Sr. affirms is AD 70, it states that some of those disciples would not taste death until they saw Christ return. It therefore seems logical that the visible coming of Christ at AD 66-70 which is mentioned in Matt. 16:27-28 must be the same coming dealt with in both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11.

The commander of the angelic hosts (Christ) was present with His angelic armies on that occasion (AD 66), just like Rev. 19:11-21 pictures for us. This was the visible return of Christ with His angels to judge His enemies and reward His saints, as both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11 had predicted. Matt. 24:29-31 and Luke 21:25-28 also indicated there would be visible "signs" accompanying the return of Christ with His angels to raise the dead out of Hades, perform the judgment, and reward His faithful saints. This fulfills the "in like manner" terms of the Acts 1:11 text. Both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11 fit the Matt. 16:27-28 "visibility" pattern.

It is also clear from the similarities between 1 Cor. 15 and 1 Thess. 4 that these two "parousia" texts are speaking of the same AD 70 return of Christ. Since both texts state that the resurrection will occur in connection with the "parousia" (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:15-17), and since the NT does not distinguish between two different parousias separated by thousands of years, and since this parousia is said to occur in the lifetime of some who would "live and remain" until it occurred (1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:15), then it is clear that these two texts were fulfilled in AD 70. This forces some adjustment in our concepts about the nature of fulfillment once we get the time of fulfillment straightened out. All three of these difficult second coming texts have been explained from a consistent AD 70 fulfillment. This leaves partial preterists nowhere to hide. We can thank Russell for pointing the way toward this approach to these three texts.

A LITERAL RAPTURE

Another area in which Russell greatly served the interests of future generations was the rapture. Four other scholars within a generation of Russell also taught the idea of a literal rapture in AD 70 (Milton S. Terry, E. Hampden-Cook, Richard Weymouth, and William S. Urmy). There are minor differences in the way each of these men described it, but all agreed there was a removal of some true Christians in connection with the return of Christ in AD 70. Modern advocates of a literal AD 70 rapture (such as Garrett Brown, Walt Hibbard, Arthur Melanson, Ian Harding, Ed Stevens, and others) go further to assert that all true Christians (and nothing but true Christians) alive at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem were "snatched away" to be with Christ in the spiritual realm. Russell suggested that only some Christians were caught up – a "partial rapture" with the sleepers or unwatchful Christians left on earth. But it seems from Jesus' sharp criticism of that group in Matthew 25 (and in the book of Revelation) that the sleepers or unwatchful were not true Christians. The tribulation and apostasy eliminated the insincere. By the time of the rapture the only watchful, awake, and "worthy ones" were the true Christians. There would have been few (if any) pretenders and "mere professing Christians." So in either view, the group of saints actually raptured is basically the same, whether we see it as only the watchful Christians, or as true Christians only.

The arguments we all use to establish the necessity of a literal rapture in AD 70 are exactly the same. The strongest arguments are the Biblical "expectation statements." Scripture alone is our standard, not scripture plus history, tradition or anything else. The only authoritative material that we can use to make any final decisions about what did or did not occur in AD 70 is the Bible. If it says the Parousia was going to occur in AD 70, that should be enough. We shouldn't have to be convinced by history or any external arguments. If the text of scripture says something is going to occur within a certain time frame, then we are bound to believe it, regardless of whether we can find external historical or traditional support for it, and regardless of whether our credulity is stretched to the breaking point. The same thing happened in the field of archaeology in regard to the Hittites and Darius the Mede. The Bible was the only evidence we had for the existence of these people for a long time, yet that did not make advocates of sola scriptura doubt the veracity of the Bible. So for sincere believers, the question boils down to this: What did the NT writers

believe, teach, and expect to see, hear, and experience at the Parousia? Did they expect to experience the Parousia in any conscious way? Did they expect to "know" it had occurred afterwards? Or did they expect it to happen totally in the invisible realm without being consciously aware of it in any way? It is these Biblical "expectation statements" that also need to be examined, not just the "time statements."

We Preterists have pressed Futurists with the "time statements," and rightly so, because they are "sola scriptura" arguments. They are Biblical statements that need to be dealt with. So are the "expectation statements." What the "time statements" do for Preterism in general, the "expectation statements" do for the rapture view in particular. The time statements nail down the "time" of the parousia and its related events, while the expectation statements reveal the content and "nature" of those events in the experience of the Church.

Just because the Parousia may not have been validated historically in the way some might have preferred, it never stopped us from seeing it as a fulfilled "fact." The "time statements" forced us to believe that it must have occurred, regardless of a lack of historical confirmation. Even if we are unable to find external historical proof for a literal rapture in AD 70, it does not invalidate the Bible's affirmation of it. Our concern is simply, "What does Scripture actually teach?"

Rapture advocates have been accused of teaching a rapture based only on external historical "arguments from silence." Not so! Scripture is the driving force. The expectation statements are Biblical arguments, just like the time statements. The time statements help establish the time of fulfillment, while the expectation statements help determine the nature of fulfillment. As you study the following list of Biblical passages, find the answers to these two questions: (1) What does Jesus say is actually going to be seen and experienced by His saints at the Parousia? (2) What do the NT writers and pre-70 Christians indicate that they were expecting to actually see and experience at the Parousia? (Matt. 16:27-28; 19:28; 24:31; John 14:2-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Cor. 5:1-4; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 2 Thess. 1:6- 10; 2:1; and 1 Jn. 3:2). These texts show clearly what the first century Church expected to experience at the Parousia.

Paul said that when Christ would come to cast His enemies "away from His presence" and gather His saints (2 Thess. 1:6–2:1), that the saints would "marvel at Him" in His presence and in the presence of all who have believed, and Christ would be glorified by their collective presence with Him "on that day." That doesn't sound like a very silent occasion to me. Did they fail to "recognize the time of His visitation" and remain silent (as if it had not occurred). They should have been celebrating and proclaiming the fulfillment of His Parousia (if they were still around). There is a strange silence here, at the very time when we would have expected anything but silence, when they said they would be marveling at Christ in His presence. Their silence does not match their expectations, unless they were doing those things in the heavenly realm (no longer on the earthly scene).

If all living Christians remained on earth after AD 70, why didn't some of those who saw these incredible events in AD 70 say something about it? Why the silence, if they were still around? Russell and the other four scholars mentioned above proposed the literal rapture to explain that silence. Silence is not a significant argument all by itself. But as Sherlock Holmes would agree in the case of the dog that didn't bark when a supposed outsider broke in, sometimes silence is significant, especially when the circumstances would force us to expect otherwise. Expectations demand our attention even in the case of silence, if the Bible clearly teaches us to expect something other than silence. And it does.

For more indepth studies of the rapture at the parousia in AD 66-70, see this author's book entitled, Expectations Demand A Rapture, and the excellent series of articles written by Ian Harding.

THE MILLENNIUM

Russell was uncomfortable with any view of the Millennium which ended at AD 70 (p. 514). He considered such a short duration of the millennium (40 years or less) to be "so violent and unnatural that we cannot hesitate to reject it" (p. 514). He suggested the millennium only began at AD 70 with a limited "first" resurrection and judgment (of the righteous only), and is still ongoing in history and moving toward a yet future final resurrection and judgment

of the rest of the dead (the wicked only – p. 518). It seemed to him that the Millennium was "introduced parenthetically" as an exception to the AD 70 time limits of the rest of the book (p. 514).

He noted that some people (such as myself) consider the idea of a Millennium after AD 70 as challenging the imminent time indicators throughout the book of Revelation. We would prefer a 40-year millennium (AD 30-70) which stays within those time limits.

Russell places a flashback to AD 70 at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:10), so that the white throne judgment in Rev. 20:11ff takes place in AD 70. Preterists who take the 40-year approach cannot disallow his flashback, since we insert one at the beginning of the millennium.

Russell's millennium interpretation deserves careful consideration. He acknowledged his understanding of it might not be perfect, and held out the hope that succeeding generations "will soon correct what is proved to be erroneous, and confirm what is shown to be right." (p. 535)

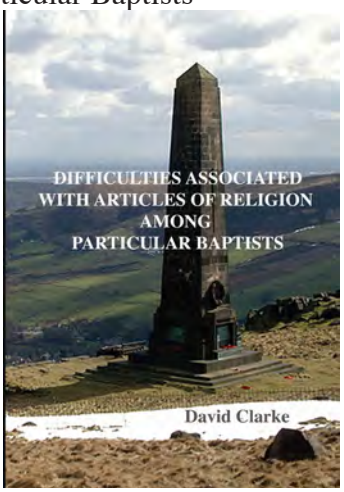
In conclusion, I have to repeat how impressed I am with Russell's exegetical work here. Many thousands of Bible students all over the world have been, and will continue to be, blessed by this book. We send this reprint forth with strong encouragement to seriously and objectively consider everything he has to say, and to "search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so." (Acts 17:11)

Edward E. Stevens

Bradford, Pennsylvania July, 2003

DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH ARTICLES OF RELIGION

Among Particular Baptists



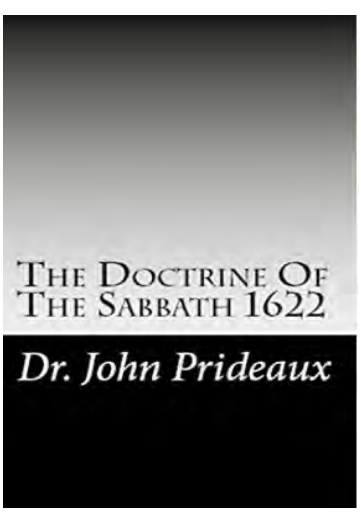
Articles of Religion are important when dealing with matters of the Christian Religion, however problems occur when churches fail to recognize there is a growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in any believer. When a person first believes in the Lord Jesus Christ they cannot possibly have a comprehensive knowledge of a churches constitution or its articles of religion, before solemnly subscribing to them. The author David Clarke has introduced the Doctrines of Grace to Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan, situated in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan and bearing in mind his own experience with articles of religion he has compiled Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan articles of religion from the first Bierton Particular Baptists of 1831,of which he is the sole surviving member, the First London Baptist Confession, 2nd edition 1646, and those of Dr John Gill, in order to avoid some of the difficulties encounter by Particular Baptist during the later part of the 19 century and since. This booklet highlights the problem and suggests the Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan is as step in the right direction.

Isaiah 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

Contents

Introduction
Articles of Religion Important
Authors Testimony
Bierton Particular Baptist Church
A Difficulty Over Articles Of Religion
Written From Experience
Bierton Particular Baptists History
1 First London Particular Baptists Confession 1646, 2nd Edition
The Development of Articles Of Religion,Act of Toleration 14 Additions That Are Wrong
2 London Baptist Confession 1689 1
Notes on The London Baptists Confession1689
3 Bierton Particular Baptists Articles of Religion, 1831
Diffculties Over Articles of Religion
Notes on Bierton Particular Baptists 1831
4 The Gospel Standard Articles of Religion 1878
Observations of the Gospel Standard Articles of religion
Letter to Mr Role's of Luton Added Articles
My comments Article 32
The Diffculties Of these Articles Proved
Serious Doctrinal Errors Held
Recommendation for Serious Minded
5 Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan 2016
6 Appendix 60
Gospel Standard 31 Articles

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SABBATH 1622



by John Prideaux (Author)

Of all the controverts which have exercised the Church of Christ, there is none more ancient than that of the Sabbath: So ancient that it took beginning even

in the infancy of the Church, and grew up with it. For as we read in the Acts There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees, which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise the people, and to command them to keep the law of Moses; whereof the Sabbath was apart: Which in the general, as the apostles labours to suppress in their first General Council, held in Jerusalem: So did S. Paul, upon occasion of whose ministry this controversy first began, endeavor what he could against the particular, shapely reproving those which hallowed yet the Jewish Sabbath and observed days, and months, and times, as if he had bestowed his labor in vain upon them. But more particularly in his epistle to the Colossians, Let no man judge you in respect of a holy day or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which were a shadow of things to come but the body is of Christ. Both which expressions of Paul are in this following discourse produced to this very purpose. Yet notwithstanding all this care both generally of the Apostles and more especially of Paul to suppress this error; it grew up still and had its patrons and abettors.

This reproduction of, 'The doctrine of the Sabbath', by Dr. John Prideaux has been presented for those who have been troubled by the insistence of those religious people who insist that the first day of the week is the Sabbath day and to be kept holy, as dictated by the law of Moses. It is not. We include also Dr. John Gill on the subject of the circumstances of public worship as to place and time. It is the view of this publisher that the time and place of Christian worship it is a matter for the Christian community to decide and is not legislated in the scriptures.

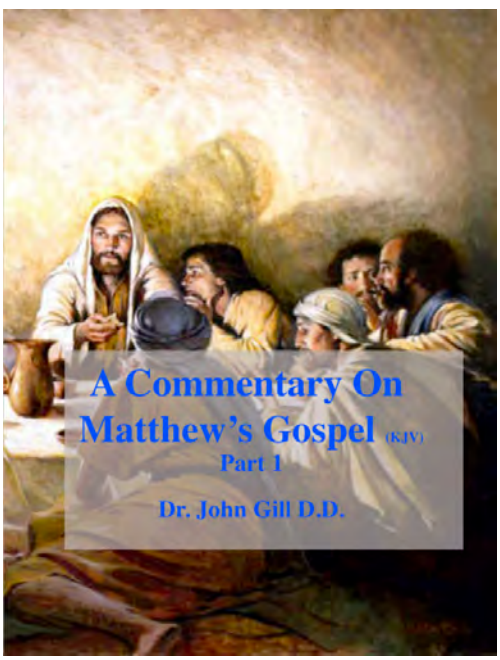
BEFORE THE COCK CROWS PART 1

The Daily Diary Of Trojan Horse International: Volume 1

David Clarke the Director of Trojan Horse International CM encountered remarkable opposition from various quarters in New Bilibid Prison, Muntinlupa City Philippines between October 2002 and July 2003. Most of those who opposed the mission were men from among Asia's most notorious criminals in the National Penitentiary, which is situated on the Reservation at Muntinlupa City, 1770, Philippines. If one were to judge the success of the mission by that amount of opposition that it experienced, then the mission was a remarkable success. Newton stated that to every force there is an equal but opposite one to oppose it and like Newton, David suggests that to every proactive work there is and equal but opposite reaction and so if this reaction were to be the measure of success, then the mission was remarkably successful. It also serves to demonstrate that God always triumphs. That God saves, not by might, but by His Spirit. That God puts to fight thousands of his enemies and empowers the one's and two's, that trust in Him in order to show that Salvation is truly of the Lord. This prison comprises of three Compounds and penal farms housing over 23,550 inmates, which are all under the control of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Bureau of Corrections. (BUCOR). The Chaplaincy, headed by Msgr. Helley Barrido, is responsible for all religious groups and voluntary work done within the Prison. "Death Row" is in the Maximum Security Compound where over 1200

men are housed and they are all under the sentence of death. Some are doubly confirmed and due to be put to death by lethal injection. Trojan Horse International C.M. was established in the early part of 2001 and composed of a team of two from England, David Clarke and Gordon John Smith. The mission was set up as a Christian ministry, seeking to bring assistance to Michael John Clarke, David's older brother, and many inmates at the Prison. This was where Michael had been incarcerated, for a crime he did not commit, and was serving a prison sentence of 16 years. He had been baptized as a Christian. In an old 45-gallon US Oil drum, on the 16th September 2000 in the Maximum Compound. Michael, like his brother David, had been converted from crime to Christ whilst suffering the bitter effects of this form of injustice in the Philippines. How ever Michaels conversion was some thirty years after David who had been brought up in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire and had been converted from crime to Christ, at the age of 20 years old, on the 16th January 1970.

A COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW



By John Gill

The Gospel According to Matthew was the first written gospel and published sometime between (AD 31-38). It was written before Mark's (AD 38-44) and Luke's Gospel (AD-61).

Matthew was a Jew and one of the 12 Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ and named Levi. He was a tax collector for the Romans. There are two strong traditions that Matthew made a personal copy of his gospel and gave it to Barnabas, a companion of the Apostle Paul.

Matthew tells of the birth and lineage of Jesus. The life death, resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the final words of Jesus before his ascension into heaven.

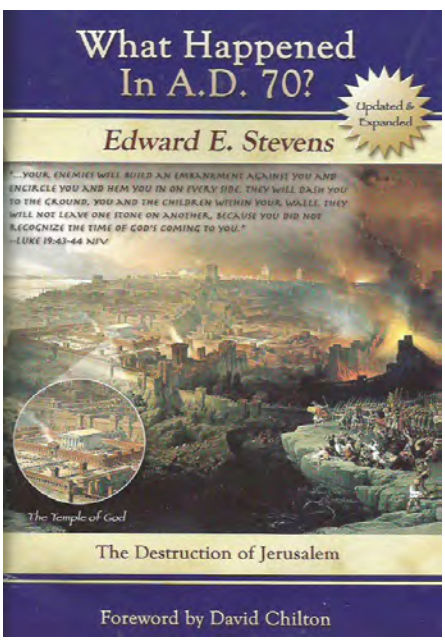
This publication is presented knowing that Matthew penned his gospel that contains all those things the Lord Jesus wanted him to publish.

Matthew records the Olivet prophesy of Jesus concerning those fearful things that were to come to pass within the period of that generation and after his ascension.

It is the intention of the publisher that this will assist in making the gospel known to all people and is published in two parts PART 1 chapter 1 to 16.

And PART 2 chapter 17 to 28.

WHAT HAPPENED IN A.D. 70


What Happened
In A.D. 70?
Updated & Expanded
Edward E. Stevens
"...your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."
--Luke 19:43-44 NIV
The Temple of God
The Destruction of Jerusalem
Foreword by David Chilton

This book introduces a view of Bible prophecy which many have found extremely helpful in their Bible study. It explains the end time riddles which have

always bothered students of Bible prophecy. It is a consistent view which makes the book of Revelation much easier to understand. It establishes when the New Testament canon of scripture was completed, demolishes the liberal attack on the inspiration of the New Testament, and is more conservative on most other issues than traditional views. And there is no compromise of any essential Biblical doctrine of the Christian faith.

The key to understand any passage of scripture has always been a good grasp of the historical setting in which it was originally written {audience relevance). Two thousand yeas from now our history, culture, politics and language will have changed dramatically. Imagine someone then having to learn the ancient language of "American English" to read our USA newspapers! If they saw one of our political cartoons with a donkey and elephant, what would they think? How would they go about understanding it? Not only would they have to study the language, but also our culture, history, politics and economics. The same applies to Bible study. If we are really going to understand what all the "donkeys and elephants" (beasts, harlots, dragons, etc.) Symbolize in the book of Revelation, we will have to seriously and carefully study the language, history, culture and politics of the First Century. Of course, the truths essential for salvation are couched in simple language that everyone can grasp. But there are numerous scriptures in the Bible which are "hard to understand" (cf. 2 Pet 3:16), and Bible prophecy is one of those things which must be approached with much more focus on the original historical art cultural context (audience relevance)

One of the main purposes of this book is to provide a closer look at the historical framework behind the New Testament. Many hove found it helpful to lay aside (at least temporarily) the legion of speculative opinions about the book of Revelation, and look at a more historical alternative, which is that the book of Revelation was written to the first century church and had primary relevance to them. It warned of events that were about to happen in their lifetime, and prepared them for the tribulation and other events associated with the End of the Jewish Age.

Atheists, skeptics, Jew, Muslims, and liberal critics of the bible use the supposed failure of those end times events to occur in the First Century to undermine the integrity of Christs and the inspired NT writings.

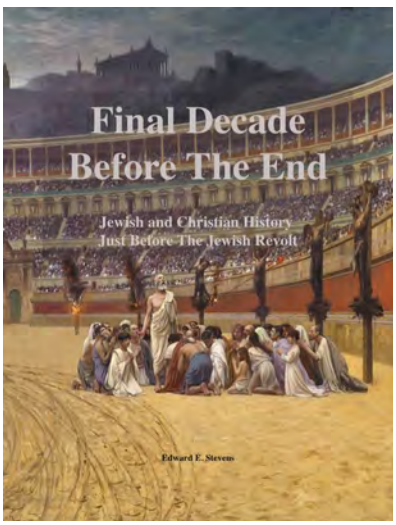
Non-Christian Jews laugh at this supposed non-occurrence, and use it as evidence that Jesus is not the Messiah. Their forefathers in the flesh rejected Jesus in His first coming because He did not fulfill the Old Testament prophecies in the materialistic and nationalistic way that they were expecting, even though Jesus told them that His Kingdom was not of this world, and that it would be within them instead. Yet it seems that many futurists today are expecting that same kind of materialistic and nationalistic kingdom to arrive at a future return of Christ Are they making the same mistake about the Second Coming that the Jews made about His first coming? Jesus repeatedly said His Kingdom is "not of this world" and that it would "not come with observation." It is a spiritual entity, and it has arrived We live in it. Both futurist Christians and non-Christian Jews need to realize this.

Christians are finally beginning to seek alternatives to the faitally flawed futuristic interpretation. This book introduces the Preterist view.

"Preterist" simply means past in fulfillment It means that Christ has already fulfilled His promise to return and consummate redemption in Himself and His ongoing spiritual kingdom (the church). We should be like the noble-minded Bereans and "search the scriptures daily to see whether these things are true'' You might want to have your Bible open alongside as you read.

Edward E. Stevens
INTERNATIONAL PRETERIST
ASSOCIATION
Bradford, Pennsylvania
April 17,2010

FINAL DECADE BEFORE THE END



Ed Stevens

Introduction

Ever since the booklet, **What Happened In AD 70**? was published in 1980, there have been constant requests for more detailed information about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish, Roman, and Christian history associated with it. Over the years since then I have studied Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Eusebius, the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Pseudepigrapha, Church Fathers, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish/Christian writings, trying to determine exactly what happened, when it happened, and the effect it had upon the Church.

Then in 2002, after I began to promote J. S. Russell's view of a literal rapture, the demand for historical documentation of the fulfillment of all eschatological events dramatically increased. That forced me to dig much deeper. So in 2007 I put together a 21-page chronology of first century events. Two years later in 2009, we published a more substantial 73-page manuscript entitled, First Century Events in Chronological Order. That helped fill the void, but it did not go far enough. It only increased the appetite for a more detailed and documented historical reconstruction of first century events.

The book of Acts does not give a lot of details about the other Roman and Jewish events that were happening while Paul was on his various missionary journeys. For those events, we have to go to the other contemporary Jewish and Roman historians such as Josephus and Tacitus. The closer we get to AD 70, the more important all of those Jewish and Roman events become. They form an important backdrop behind the Christian events, and show how all the predictions made by Jesus were literally fulfilled. Every High Priest and Zealot leader that we encounter from AD 52 onwards are directly connected with the events of the Last Days. Things are heating up, not only for the Christians, but also for the Jews and the Romans.

Paul on his missionary journeys was clearly following a plan which was providentially arranged for him by Christ: (1) to plant new churches among all nations and not just Jews, (2) appoint elders and deacons in every church (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 4:17), (3) write inspired epistles to guide them, (4) instruct his fellow workers to "teach these things to faithful men who would be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2), and (5) establish the Gentiles in the Church and make them one united body with the Jews (Eph 4). Everywhere Paul went, he followed this pattern. We see this clearly as we study the historical narrative in Acts and Paul's other epistles that were written during this time. These are essential patterns that the apostles evidently bound upon both Gentile and Jewish Christians, and which were intended to be the pattern for all future generations of the eternal Church (Eph 3:21; 2Tim 2:2).

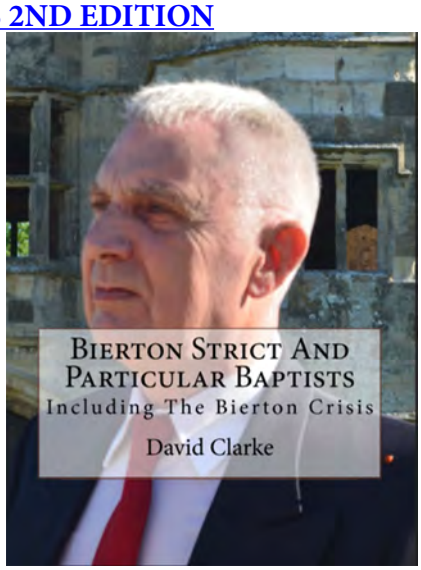
We begin our study by looking at the most likely dates for Matthew (AD 31-38) and Mark (AD 38-44), and then proceed to the first three epistles of Paul (Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians), which were written on his second missionary journey (AD 51-53). Including these five books in our study allows us to date all twenty-seven books of our New Testament, and show how the NT canon was formed and completed before the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66. The study of New Testament canonization in itself is a good reason for reading this work, without even looking at the historical fulfillment of all of the endtime prophecies that we document here.

After looking at the dates for those first five books, we then move on into the third missionary journey of Apostle Paul which began in AD 54. It was during this final dozen years (from AD 54 until AD 66) when the birth pangs and signs of the end started increasing

in both intensity and frequency, along with a quickening pace of NT books being written. We show how 19 of our 27 NT books (70 percent) were written during those last five years just before the Neronic persecution (AD 60-64). The Great Commission was finished, and the rest of the endtime events predicted in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled during that time of "tribulation" upon the church and the "days of vengeance" upon the unbelieving Jews (Luke 21:22).

Edward E. Stevens
INTERNATIONAL PRETERIST ASSOCIATION
Bradford, Pennsylvania
April 17,2010

BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS 2ND EDITION

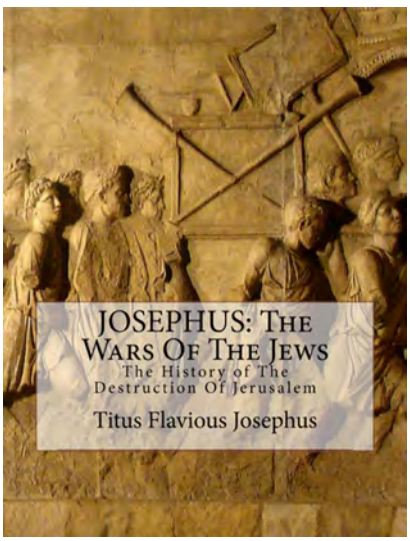


This book tells the story and life of David Clarke in the form of an autobiography. It is no ordinary book in that David and his brother were both notorious criminals in the 60's, living in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, where they were MODs and were both sent to prison for and malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license . They were however both converted from crime to Christ and turned their lives around. This story tells of David's conversion to Christianity in 1970 and that of Michael's conversion, 1999 some 30 years later. It tells of their time in HMP Canterbury Prison and David's time in HMP Wormwood Scrubs and Dover Borstal. It also tells of David's criminal activity and the crimes he committed before his miraculous conversion from crime to Christ, during a bad experience on LSD, in 1970. It tells how he became a Christian over night and how he learned to read in order to come to a fuller knowledge of the gospel. He learned to read through reading the bible and classical Christian literature. David tells of the events that led to him making a confession to the police about 24 crimes he had committed since leaving Dover Borstal in 1968 and of the court case where he was not sentenced. It tells how David's educated himself and went on to Higher education, and graduated with a Certificate in Education and how he went on to teach Electronics, for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education. It tells of his life as a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church, which was a Gospel Standard cause, and how he was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel. David tells of the various difficulties that he faced once he discovered the many doctrinal errors amongst the various Christian groups he met and of the opposition that he experience when he sought to correct them. David recorded his experience and finding in his book "The Bierton Crisis" 1984, written to help others. David's tells how his brother Michael was untouched by his conversion in 1970 and continued his flamboyant lifestyle ending up doing a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996. David tells how Michael too was converted to Christianity through reading C.S. Lewis's book, "Mere Christianity", and him being convinced that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God. David then tells of his mission to the Philippines, to bring help and assistance to Michael, in 2001 and of their joint venture in helping in the rehabilitation of many former convicted criminals, not only in New Bilibid Prison but other Jails in the Philippines. David tells how he felt compelled to write this story in his book , "Converted On LSD Trip". once he got news of his brothers arrest, in the Philippines, via ITN Television news broadcast, in 1995. This book was published when he got news of his brothers conversion from crime to Christ in 1999, which was after serving 5 years of his 16 year sentence. This story is told in their joint book, "Trojan Warriors", that contains the testimonies of 66 notorious criminals who too had turned there lives around, from crime to Christ, 22

of which testimonies are men on Death Row. David say he believes his story could be of great help to any one seeking to follow the Lord Jesus Christ but sadly Michael died in New Bilibid Prison of tuberculosis, in 2005 before their vision of bringing help to many was realized.

Paperback: 356 pages
2 edition (16 Feb. 2015)
ISBN-10: 1519553285
ISBN-13: 978-1519553287
Product Dimensions: 13.3 x 2.1 x 20.3 cm
www.Amazon.co.uk

JOSEPHUS: THE WARS OF THE JEWS



The History of The Destruction Of Jerusalem

Authored by Titus Flavius Josephus, Designed by Translated by William Winston

ISBN-13: 978-1985029132 (CreateSpace-Assigned)
ISBN-10: 1985029138
BISAC: Religion / Christianity / History / General

Josephus was an eye witness to those events that he records in this book, 'The Wars of The Jews', or 'The History of The Destruction Of Jerusalem'.

He records historic events that took place during and after the times of the New Testament scriptures.

The book of Revelation was a prophecy, given to Jesus Christ, and published by the Apostle John, about those things that were shortly to come to pass in his day.

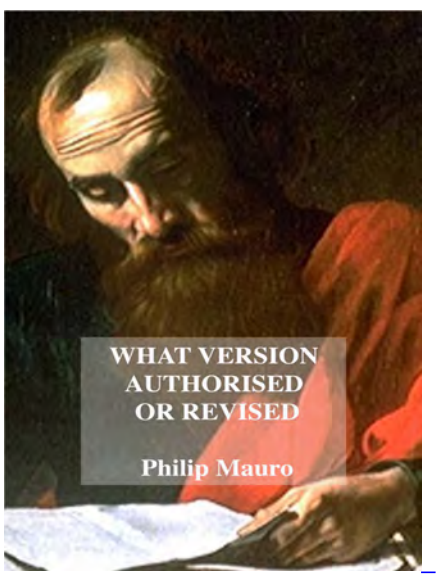
From the internal evidence of the book Revelation was written before the Neuronic persecution, of 66 A.D. and before the fall off Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, in 70. A.D. This is because the book records that the temple in Jerusalem was still standing at the time the book was written and not around 95 A.D. as Eusebius mistakenly says.

The historic events that Josephus records are remarkable as they give evidence to the fulfillment of Prophecy given by the Lord Jesus in his Olivet prophecy. In fact the book of Revelation was a prophecy of those events that were shortly to come to pass when Jesus spoke to John who wrote the Revelation. Jesus had informed his Apostles about future events and they lived in expectation of there fulfillment in their day.

Josephus gives the historic evidence of the fulfillment of those prophecies and that confirms scripture fulfillment.

We recommend the James Stuart Russell's book, 'The Parousia' as a very good introduction to this subject and advertised at the back of this book in our Further Publications.

WHAT VERSION AUTHORIZED OR REVISED



Philp Mauro

The book discusses the issues relating to the reliably of the Authorised Version of the Bible and the failings of the so-called Revised Versions. It reminds the reader the greek printed text, produced by Erasmus in 1516, was derived from a broad set of 8 extant

Greek manuscripts available to him in his day and in constant use by Christians to that day and not Latin bibles. Since1861 there has arisen those who claim the Authorised Version is not accurate and Wescott and Hort produced a new compiled Greek Printed text manuscript, derived from, and base upon, two 4th C handwritten extant manuscripts. Codex Sinaiticus, written in Greek and Codec's Vaticanus, written in Latin. They claimed that since these manuscripts were the oldest extant manuscripts in the world (400 years after the original writing of the new testament scriptures) they were far superior and more reliable than the text underlying the Authorised version of the bible.And since 1945 all Bible translations are based upon the New Greek manuscript text of Wescott and Hort published in 1861. This is an eclectic text and not the Received Text used by the translator of the Authorised Version of the Bible and know by Christians, throughout the Christian age, as the Word of God.It has been republished by Bierton Particular Baptist to educate serious minded people about the subject of Bible translations and support the Authorised version of the Bible. Philip Mauro was a lawyer in America, who practiced before the Supreme Court. He prepared briefs NOTES for the Scopes Trial WHICH was an American legal case in July 1925 THAT had made it unlawful to teach human evolution in any state-funded school.[1] The trial publicized the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, which set Modernists, who said evolution was not inconsistent with religion,[4] against Fundamentalists, who said the word of God as revealed in the Bible took priority over all human knowledge. The case was thus seen as both a theological contest and a trial on whether "modern science" should be taught in schools. Mauro was ALSO passenger on the British ocean liner RMS Carpathia when it rescued the passengers of the Titanic in April 1912.It is hoped that this book will rescue any that are sinking in the sea of the natural Modern man's opinion as to the reliability of the Authorised Version the bible.